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SPRING, 1961



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Reggio Emilia is the centre of an agricultural region; the population of the City is about 110,000.

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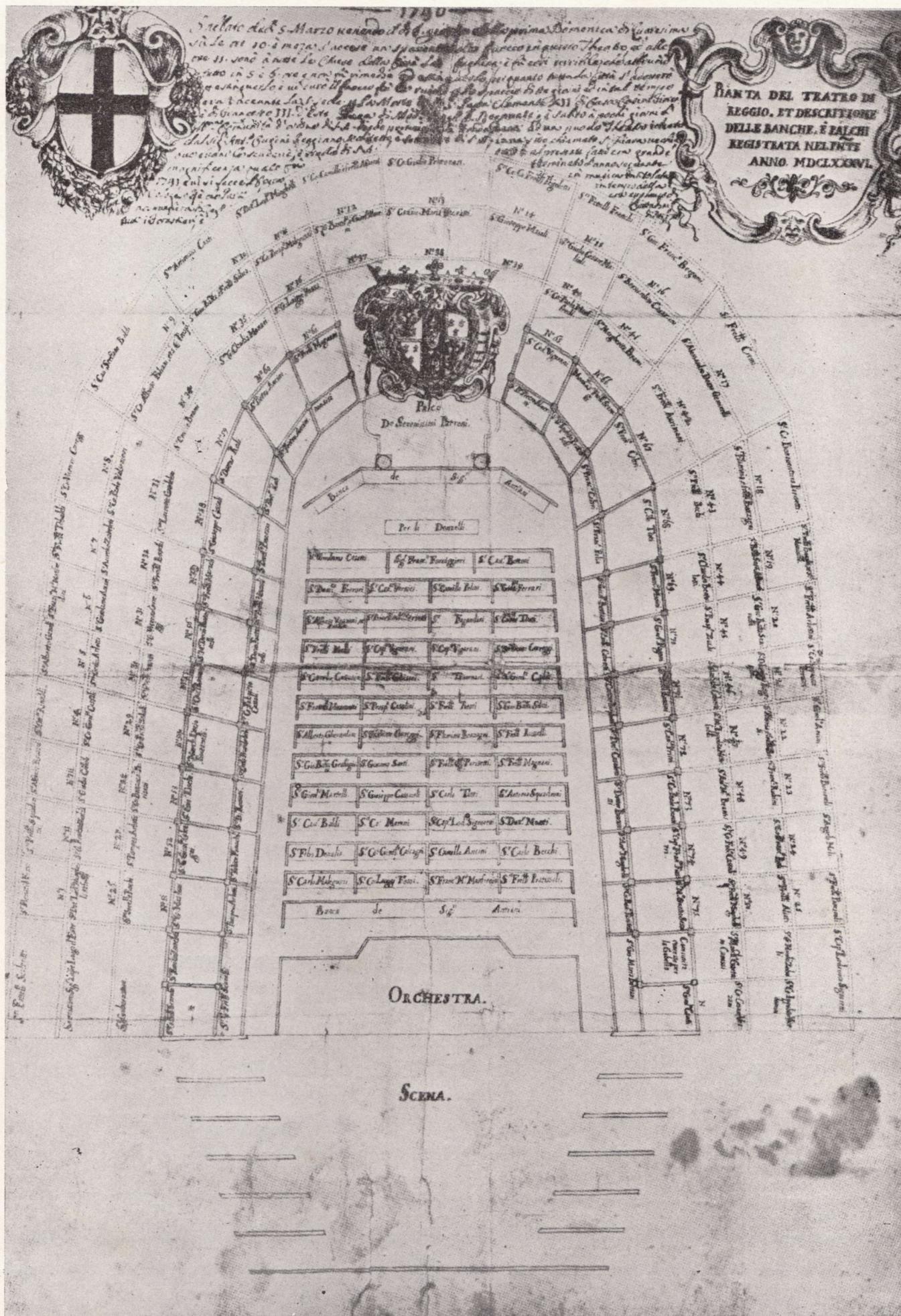
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THE THEATRES OF REGGIO EMILIA

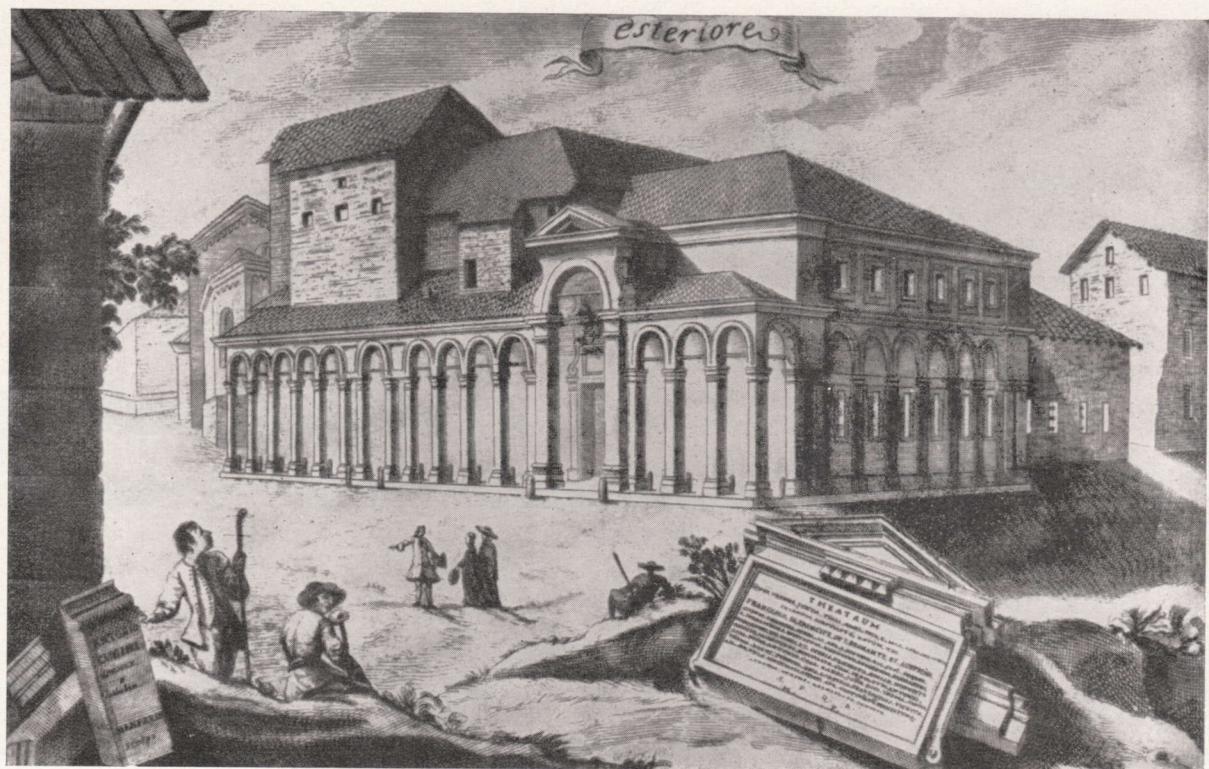
by ALBERTO CAVALLI

Reggio Emilia is situated in the heart of the province of Emilia. This small city, though the prosperous centre of a business and agricultural region, is not insensible to the claims of art and culture. Today its fine theatre and the rich archives of its library testify to a theatrical tradition that merits greater recognition if only in order to afford a wider conspectus of the Italian Theatre which must remain summary and incomplete—perhaps even false—if it takes into

account only the theatres of the biggest cities of the land of Italy. Lesser centres which today are lumped under the description “provincial towns” enjoyed in past centuries an enviable and distinguished cultural life of their own. Such a one was Reggio which from the sixteenth century onwards had its theatres, great and small, private and public, sacred and profane. In this note we will confine ourselves to considering only the more important of Reggio's

Exterior of the New Theatre di Cittadella (1740).

FIG. 2.





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theatres whose history is in many ways the history of music and drama in Italy.

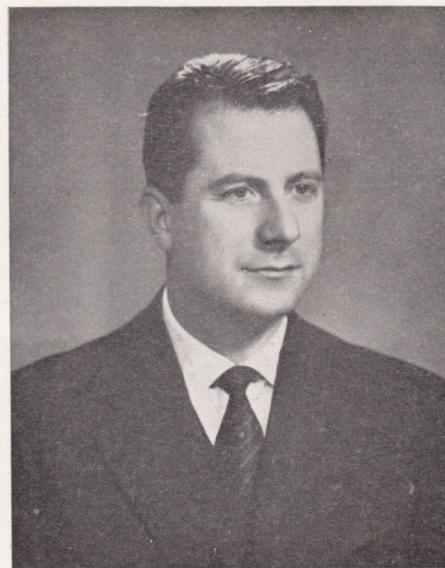
Reggio's first theatre arose against a scene of already well-established and intense dramatic activity. In their gardens, courtyards and Renaissance palaces the aristocracy were organising private theatricals in which they themselves frequently took part. Outside, in the streets and open squares, the populace crowded around the humbler booths of the strolling players, the masks and tumblers and the religious dramas. Contemporary chronicles record "spectacles" by local dramatists like "*IL MAURITIANO*" by A. Miari, a pastoral drama performed in a garden setting as well as the same author's sylvan tragicomedy "*IL VOCIFERANTE*" on the comedies of P. Scardora played this time in a patrician palace and much applauded by aristocratic audiences.

The Prior's Hall in the Palace of the Commune was adapted in 1567 as a theatre and re-christened the Play House. Here in 1568 to celebrate the marriage of Barbara of Austria and Duke Alfonso II of Este was given "*ALIDORO*", a tragedy in the classical manner by G. Bombace. The poet, the scenery designers and performers were all Reggio Emilians. Among the performers were many of the local aristocrats. The production was made memorable in the city's annals by the skill of the performers and the exalted rank of the spectators. According to the Renaissance custom four "*intermedi*" (or entrances) were interpolated between the Acts. These with music and sumptuous scenery represented the Four Elements. The musical content of the drama consisted in the prelude, the interludes and the choruses, but it is to be deduced from contemporary descriptions that "*ALIDORO*" contained what was an anticipation of that which a few decades later became known as the "*recitar cantando*" or "singing/acting" of the Florentines.

The passion for this new type of entertainment must have been very strong because during the plague of 1631 a God-fearing soul lamented that the people of Reggio still lived in Arcady enjoying their "plays, feasts, dancing and racing", not discerning that the time for repentance was at hand.

★ ★ *

What the Reggio Emilian Chroniclers call the Teatro Vecchio (The Old Theatre) was the earlier Play House enlarged and reconstructed in 1635 in semi-elliptical form and (fig. 1) endowed with four tiers of boxes and a ducal "loge". In all probability its designer was the Reggio engineer and architect, Gaspare Vigarani, who was later called to Paris by

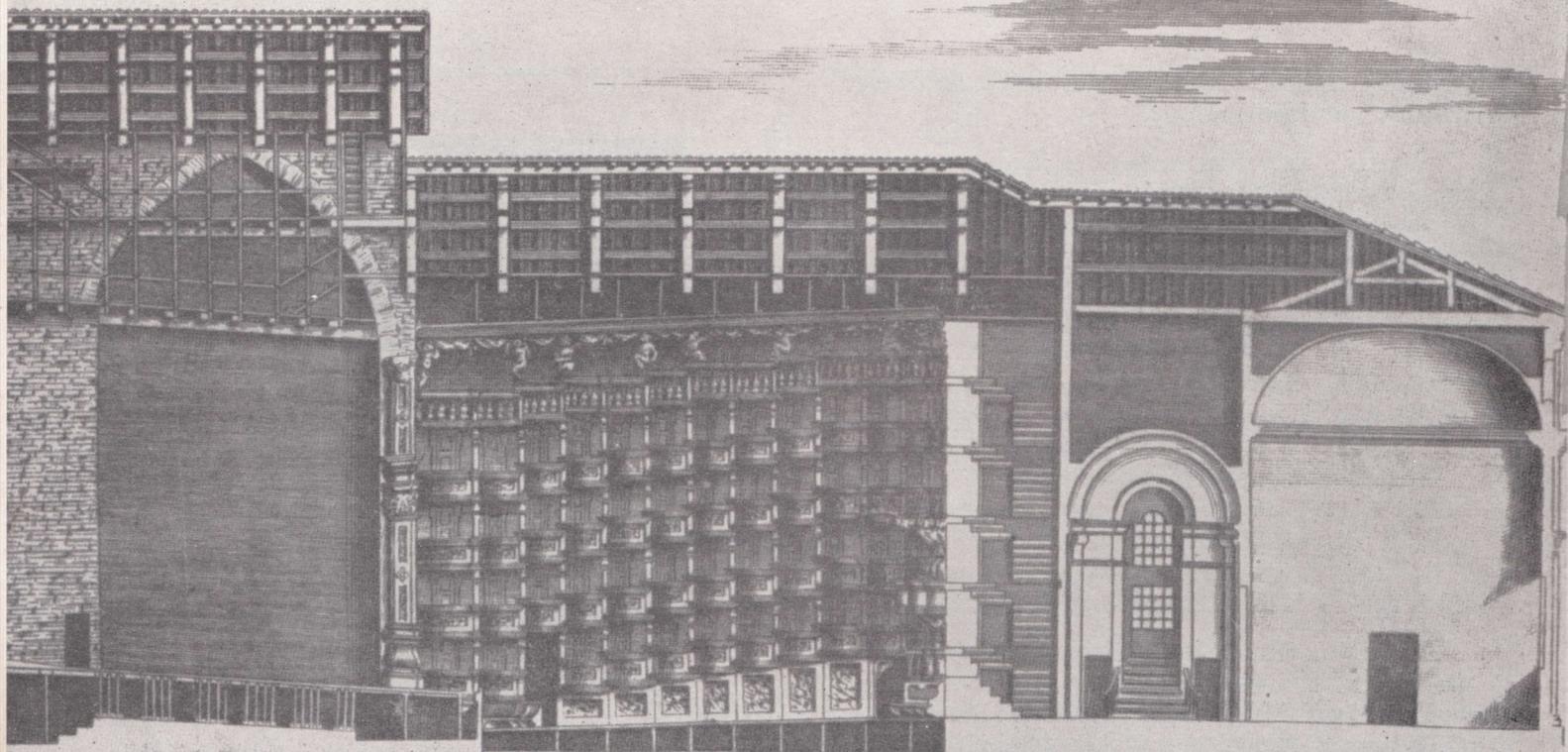


ALBERTO CAVALLI, to whom we are indebted for the article "The Theatres of Reggio Emilia", studied under Luigi Ronga at Rome University and under Fausto Torrefranca at Florence University where he graduated, his subject being musical history. His musical training was at the Conservatorio of Bolzano. At present he lectures on the history of music at the Istituto "Luigi Boccherini" at Lucca, where he is also engaged on research on music in Lucca in the eighteenth century.

Louis XIV to build the Tuilleries Palace theatre and to organise the performances there.

But by this a change was apparent also in the type of the spectators, in the music and in the nature of the spectacles. Even the most exclusive parts of the theatre were now open to all, whether nobles or townsfolk, who could afford the price of their seats. Entertainments designed exclusively for patrician tastes—the pastoral idylls such as Tasso's "*AMINTA*" and the serious classical tragedies which only bored the populace—were yielding ground to the more congenial comedies, and "happy-ending" dramas and, most of all, to the new "music drama" which was spreading from its native Florence and capturing the taste of the Italian cities and every grade of society.

In Reggio the theatre season began in Lent and continued during the Fair. One of the most famous in Northern Italy and dedicated to the *Madonna della Ghiera*, the Fair of Reggio attracted many



A section of the New Theatre di Citadella (1740).

FIG. 3.

visitors. At these times the Estes transferred their Court from neighbouring Modena to Reggio to witness the performances.

During the 1645 Fair the Teatro Vecchio gave "SANT'ALESSIO" with a libretto by Cardinal Rospigliosi and music by Stefano Landi. In 1648 "LA FINTA PAZZA" by Sacrati was performed. In the second half of the century the archives record F. Cavalli's "JASON" (1668), "LA DORI" and "L'ORONTEA" (1668 and 1674) of M. A. Cesti.

The list of established composers of the 17th century whose works were performed included many Reggio composers, though it is surprising to note the absence from these of Bendetto Ferrari, famous librettist, instrumentalist and composer, whose name is linked with the opera which inaugurated the first public theatre in Venice, the San Cassiano, in 1637.

A seemingly odd feature of the time was that while the names of the designers of scenery, of the creators of the stage machinery and of the interpreters were recorded in the librettos, the name of the composer rarely appeared. The fact was that at Reggio, as elsewhere, 17th Century opera accorded pride of place to the "*mise en scène*" to which the music and even the drama were rated as of secondary importance. Co-existence in the same work of themes sacred and profane, ancient and medieval, of history and of

mythology, was not considered to be incongruous, provided they afforded pretexts for frequent changes of scene and for the display of virtuosities of stage-craft which would seem to have been marvellous indeed considering the modest technical possibilities of the time.

When the roof of the Teatro Vecchio collapsed in 1695 under the weight of a heavy snowfall the edifice was re-constructed and its capacity increased to 700-800 seats. The re-birth of the Theatre and the marriage of Rinaldo d'Este and a Princess of Hanover were celebrated with Pollarolo's "L'ALMANSORE IN ALIMENA". To gain an idea of the excellence of the performance in this minor city which was not even the capital of the Duchy like Modena, nor counted many wealthy patrician families nor enjoyed at the time any notable degree of economic prosperity, it may suffice to recall that the director of the Theatre was one Vigarani who was probably the son of the already mentioned Gaspare, designer and producer of the spectacles at the Court of France and the collaborator of Francesco Cavalli and G. B. Lulli, and that the scene designers were the illustrious Bibbiena brothers who also painted the ceiling and perhaps the boxes of the Teatro Vecchio. Many times the Bibbienas returned to Reggio to execute in stage settings their vertiginous fantasies and founded

there a school where their work was worthily carried on by P. Spaggiari and G. Paglia.

In the first decades of the 18th century theatrical life in Reggio accurately reflected the changing tastes which were popularising themselves in all the greater Italian centres of music. Opera as a stage spectacle is displaced by "melodramma" * which was conceived as a purely vocal medium. It is the beginning of the era of the languishing Metastasian hero and we find among the works produced the melodramas of Porpora, Vivaldi, A. Bononcini, and L. Vinci. The singer held undisputed sway. It was not unusual to find in the Teatro Vecchio casts for a single opera in those days such a galaxy of fabulous singers as took part in "BAJAZET" (F. Gasparini) in 1719, namely, Borosini, Bernacchi, Marianna Bulgarella, and Faustina Bordini.

In 1740 the Vecchio was almost totally destroyed in a fire.

* "Melodramma" is still the standard Italian name for what in English is called "opera"

A new and larger theatre was built in the vicinity of the Citadella. The designer was A. Cugini. Seating 1,000 spectators, it had five tiers of boxes and a gallery. The large stage was lavishly equipped with movable scenes and ingenious machinery. The scene designer, G. Paglia, a pupil of Bibbiena, painted the ceiling and the foyers with landscapes in perspective. The new theatre excited general admiration. It was the subject both of verses and of some epigrams at the expense of the rival city of Modena.

"VOLOGESO re dei PARTI" (1741) was the inaugural spectacle with music by the Neapolitan P. Pullo and libretto by E. Lucarelli. The latter was also the author of the dedicatory inscription over the entrance which provoked some controversy and pungent epigrams on the subject of the critical taste of the Reggio Emilians. The evening was rounded off with a ballet by Sauverterre. For some time past ballets had been replacing the earlier "intermedi" and continued to do so for a long time hence.

Municipal Theatre of Reggio.

FIG. 3a.



Foto V. AIANI
Reggio: Emilio

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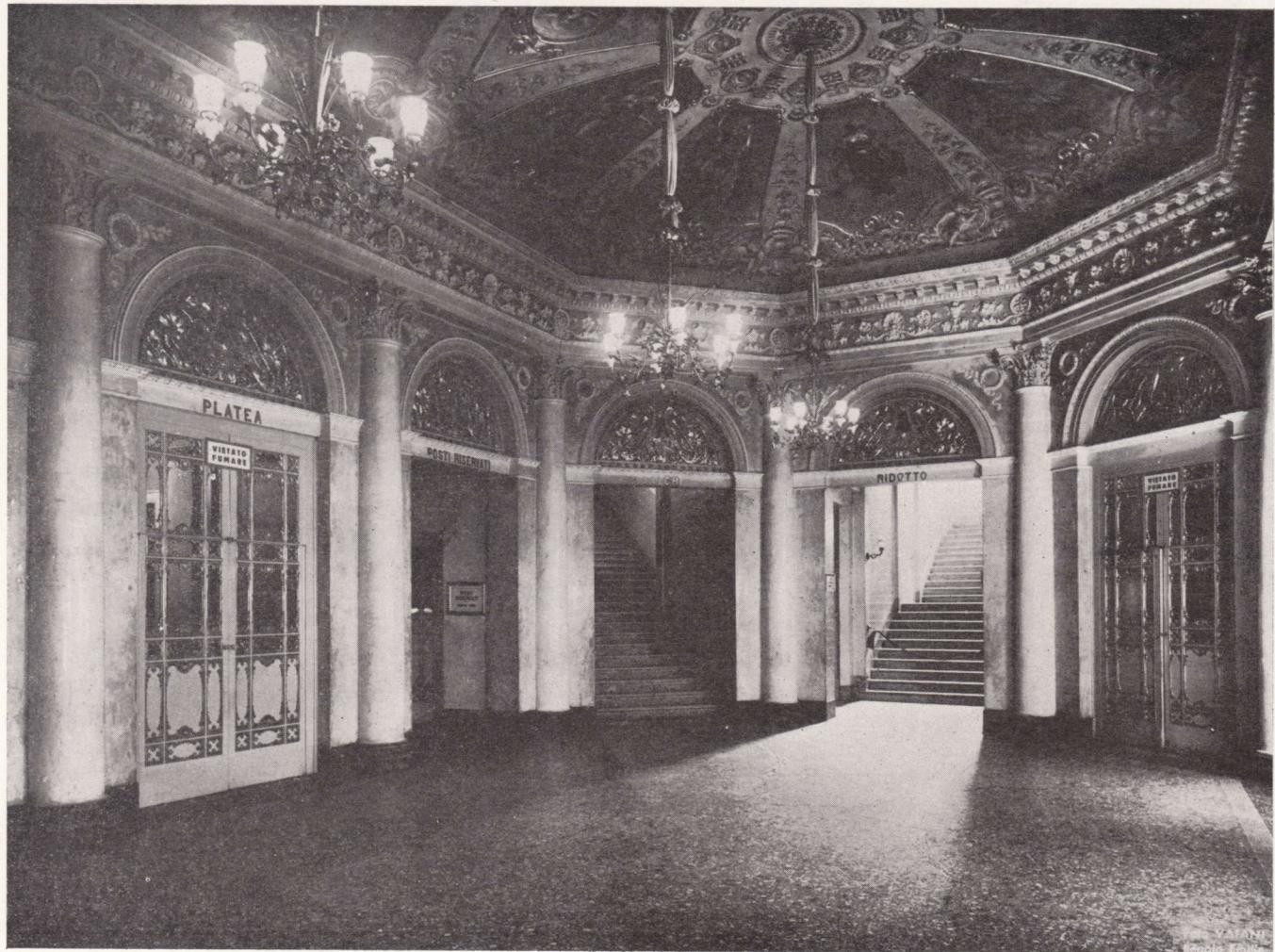
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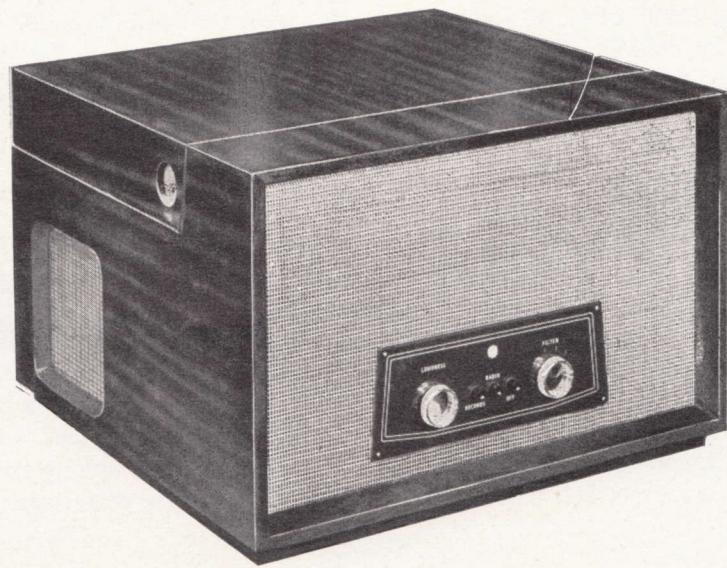
For a while the new Teatro di Citadella continued the traditions of the Vecchio, giving precedence to *opera seria* such as Gluck's "DEMOFONTE" (1743) and "IL GRAN TAMERLANO" of G. P. Lampugnani (1748). But, towards the middle of the century, and while the Duke was not resident in his territory, there came a change. Side by side with the plumed heroes of "*opera seria*", dramatic characters of a lowlier sort began to capture public favour more and more. These were the more flesh and blood people of the "*buffo*" and sentimental comedy operas of Pergolesi, Galluppi, Piccinni, and Cimarosa. In these simple mounted dramas of every-day life the bourgeoisie of Reggio recognised themselves. "*Opera seria*" was reverted to, however, for the greater occasions. It was, of course, preferred by the Court and the nobility, but accepted also by the people who were beguiled by the prodigious virtuosities of the great singers. In 1776, at Fair time, in the presence

of the Sovereign and the princes and a great concourse of visitors, "MONTEZUMA" by P. Anfossi was given, entrusted to the voices of G. F. Tenducci, L. Marchesi and Tebaldi. The scenes for the two ballets included were by Francesco Fontanesi, the greatest scene designer of the time, who for fifteen years designed the scenery for the theatre of his native town before moving off to the greater musical centres of Italy and Vienna, Frankfurt and London.

The times of "*ALIDORO*" and "*VOCIFERONTE*" now seemed very far away. The bourgeoisie and the populace brought with them to the theatre their own unsophisticated independence of judgment, and incidentally their uninhibited high spirits. An edict of 1781 deplores turmoils and disturbances in the theatre, stamping of feet, whistling, restlessness and raised voices, even among the occupants of the boxes. No sooner was the performance over than the spectators

The Entrance Hall.





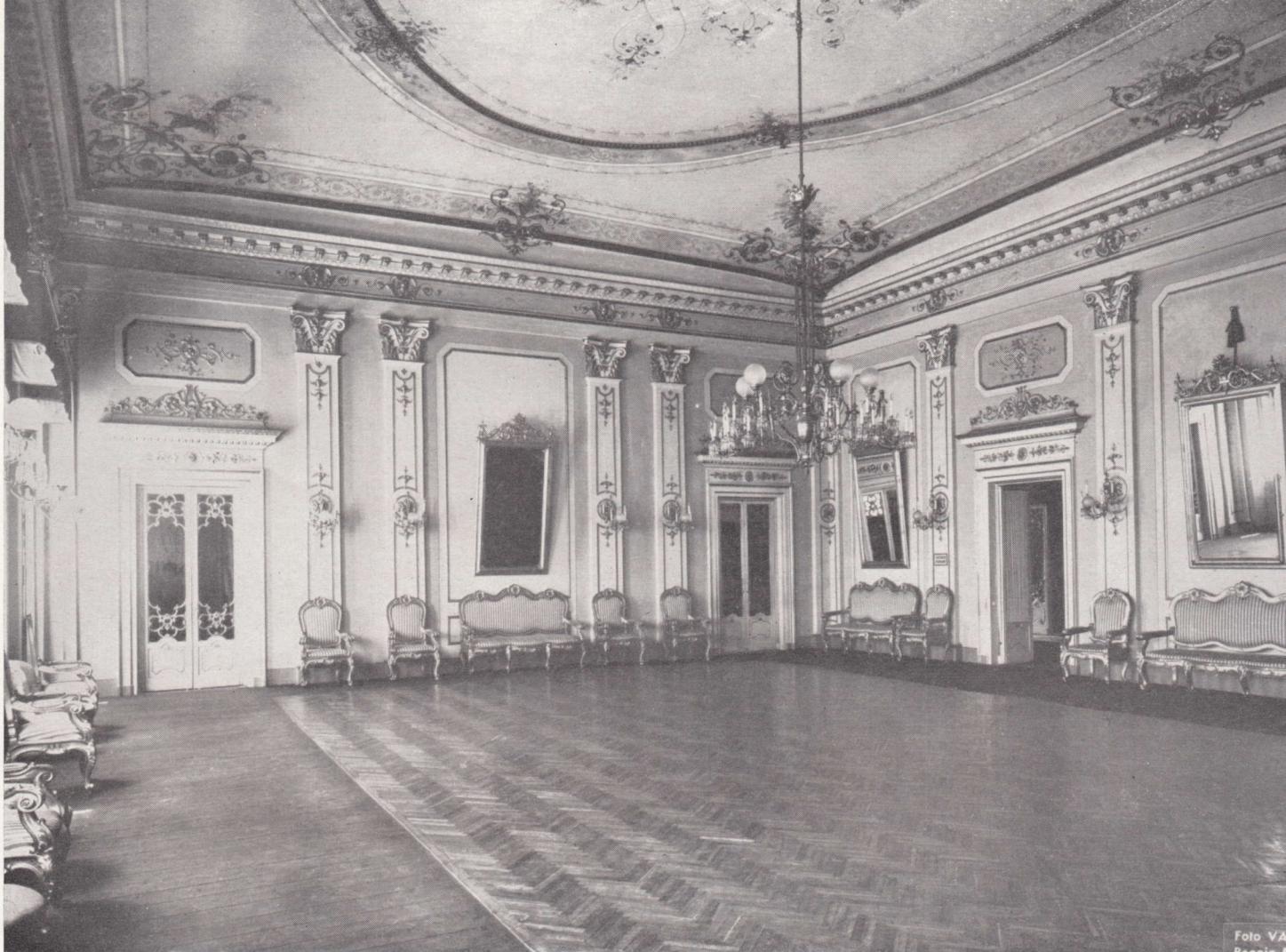
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The Foyer

Foto V.A.
Reggio

set about heating up the supper dishes they had brought with them which they then consumed on the spot.

But the story of the Teatro di Citadella extends beyond the glories of its long artistic life. In the years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars the theatre echoed first seditious murmurings against the ducal rule and the patriotic ballads inspired by the great happenings in France. Indeed, the revolutionary fervour that produced the proclamation of the Republic of Reggio led also to the setting-up of a Republican Theatre whose aim was to be "to instil in the minds of all the true precepts of sincere patriotism". Inflammatory dramas were performed, such as Alfieri's "*BRUTUS*" and "*FENELON*", which scandalised the "right-minded". With the Restoration there began in the modernised and redecorated Theatre the era of the lively rhythms of Rossini and the soaring melodies of Bellini given in performances so perfect in execution as to impress even Stendhal. The roster of interpreters included such fabulous

singers as Tacchinardi, Donzelli, Velluti, Angelica Catalani, and Rosa Morandi. In 1848, the life of the Theatre became once more embroiled in politics. In an atmosphere of fervent patriotism the principal singers and the chorus intoned Verdi's "Amnesty Hymn" in honour of Pio IX. Verdi had already been thrilling audiences with the exciting music of his "*DU FOSCARI*", "*ERNANI*", "*ATILLA*", and "*I LOMBARDI*".

In 1857, after more than a century of splendid artistic achievement, the Teatro di Citadella also perished in the flames.

On its ruins there was erected a small theatre which was to be inaugurated with "*RIGOLETTO*" but, despite the pleadings of the celebrated Vigano, and the changing of the opera's title to "*VISCARDELLO*" the reigning Duke of Modena forbade the presentation on any stage in Reggio of a drama depicting a libertine, unrepentant and despotic Duke of Mantua.

About the same period, as the fruit of the pertinacity of Count Carlo Ritorni and of the donations of the



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Wednesday, 14th—

8 o'clock — National Orchestra of Monte Carlo Opera.
Sir John Barbirolli : Szigeti (Violin), Evelyn Rothwell (Oboe).

Thursday, 15th—

3 o'clock — Prieur Instrumental Ensemble.
8 o'clock — B.B.C. Northern Ireland Orchestra.
David Curry : Brendan O'Dowda (Tenor).

Friday, 16th—

3 o'clock — Monte Carlo Festival Quintet.
Bernadette Greevy (Contralto).
8 o'clock — National Orchestra of Monte Carlo Opera.
Louis Fremaux : Sari Barabas (Soprano).

Saturday, 17th—

8 o'clock — Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra.
Silvestra — Pierre Fournier (Cello).

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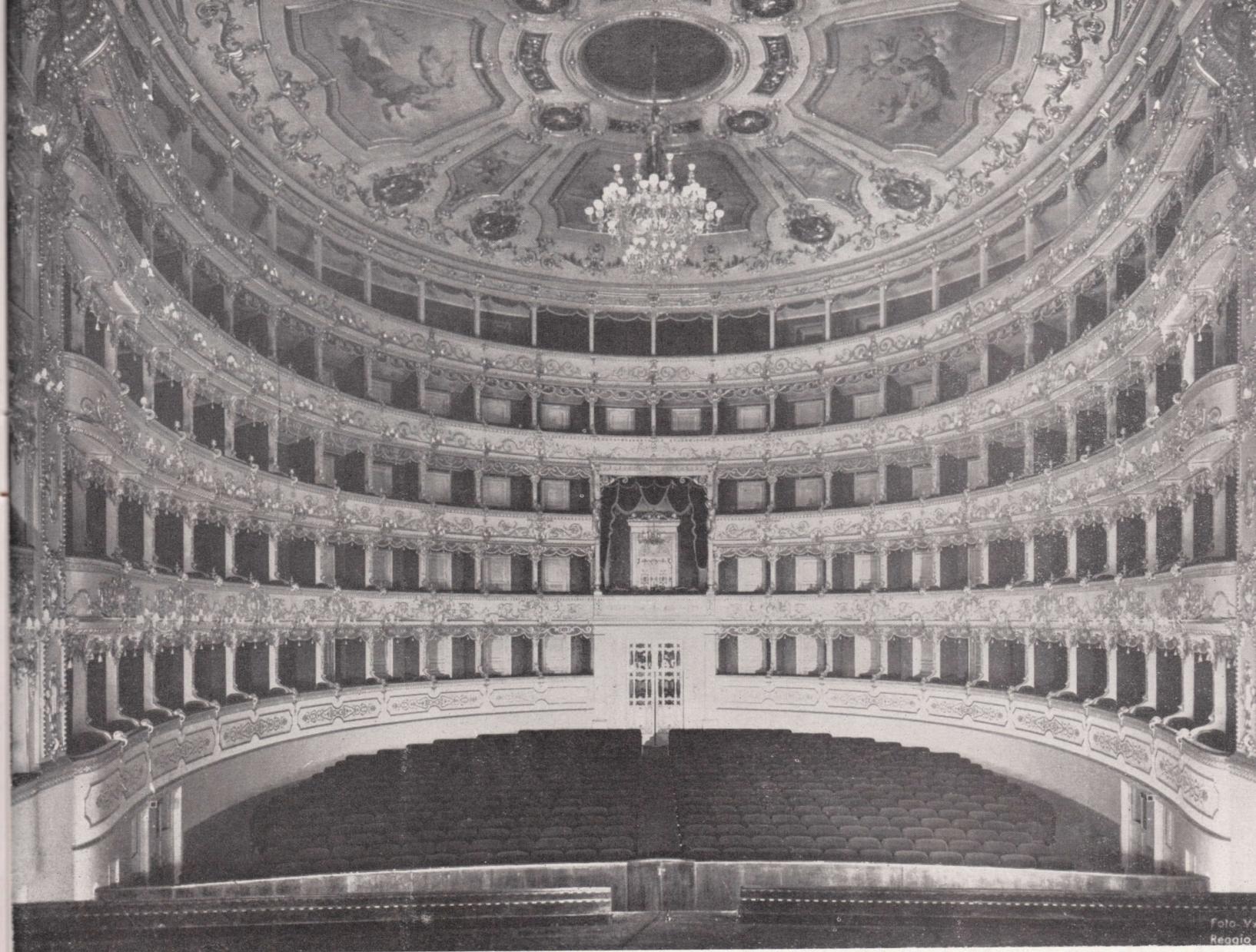
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Teatro Municipale di Reggio, seating accommodation for 1,600.

FIG. 4.

citizens, the Teatro Municipale was built to the design of the architect Costa. The bulk of the "Municipale" still dominates the principal piazza of Reggio (fig. 3). In its auditorium, the white and gold decor contrasts harmoniously with the rich crimson of the upholstery and hangings (fig. 4). This theatre, holding 1,600 spectators, is one of the most lovely of the many beautiful theatres of Italy. The numerous busts and medallions in the interior represent the glories of the Greek, Roman and Italian Theatres, while the exterior parapet and the two colonnades are adorned with statues and allegoric or mythological figures associated with Drama. The drop curtain (fig. 5) is the work of Giovanni Fontanesi, a native of Reggio, and a painter renowned for his landscapes. The main curtain, painted by A. Chierici, was to have portrayed

a heraldic figure of Resurgent Italy surrounded by figures of "Great Italians" but, for the usual political reasons, "Resurgent Italy" had to be substituted by the "Genio Artistico".

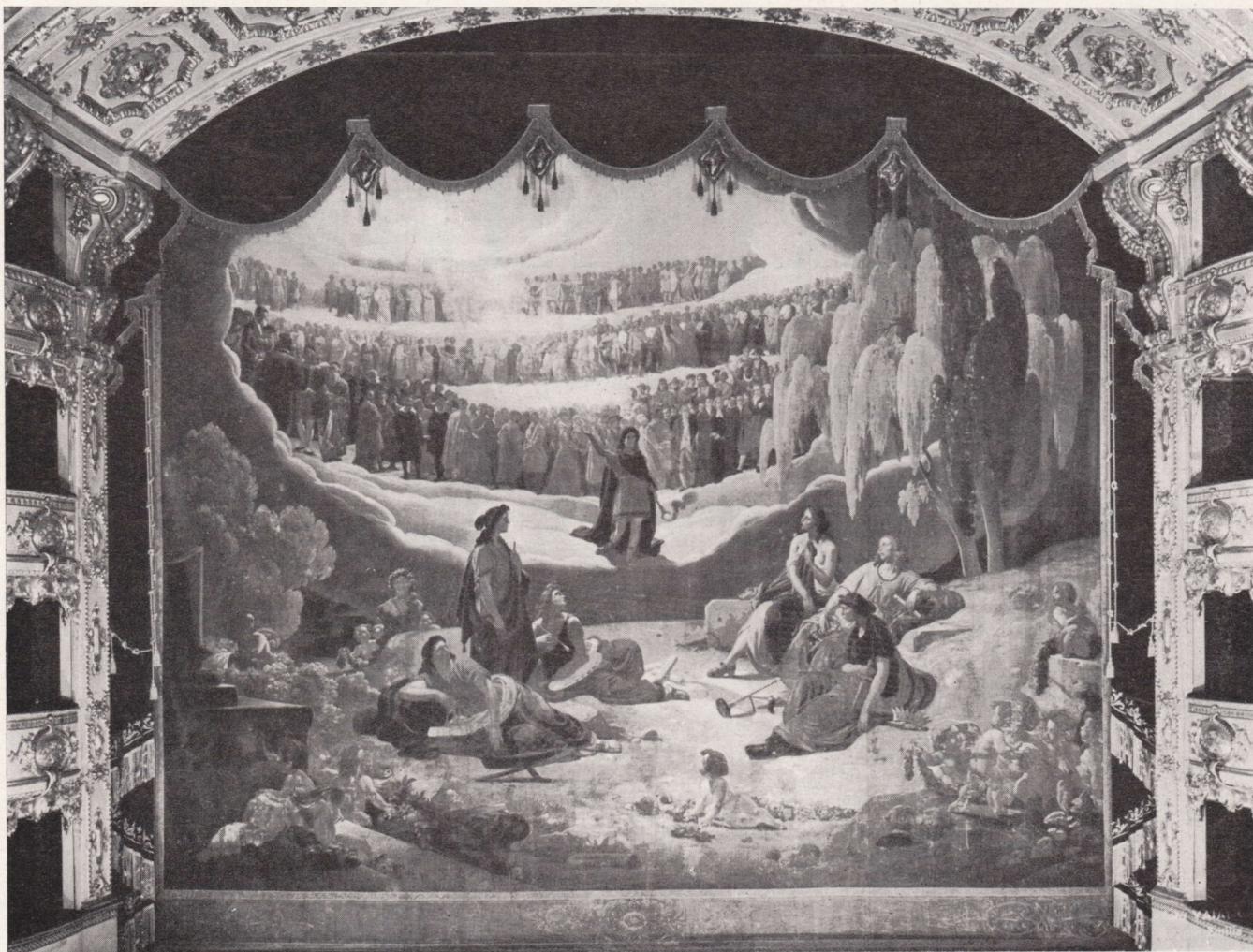
On the evening of 21st April, 1857, the Teatro Municipale raised its curtain for the first time with a performance of "*VITTOR PISANI*" by the local composer Achille Peri, a musician of talent, if not of genius, whose works at this period were being given on all the major stages of Italy. The solemnity of the occasion did not, however, disarm the critical sense of the people of Reggio who adjusted the music of "*VITTOR PISANI*" to be too insipid for an inauguration. During the same season Verdi's "*SIMON BOCCANEGRA*" was acclaimed in the presence of the composer who had himself directed the rehearsals.

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Another stage curtain of the Teatro Municipale di Reggio Emilia, work of the painter Alfonso Chierici born in Reggio 1816-73

Later in the season the Reggio audience hissed a performance of "NORMA" because of the inadequacies of the tenor, thus establishing the reputation they still retain as a "difficult" public. It has until lately been held that the singer who escapes shipwreck at the Theatres of Reggio and Parma may safely look forward to a tranquil passage in any other theatre in Italy.

Historic events, besides the productions of the great Italian and foreign masterpieces of the nineteenth century, included the performances at Reggio of the operas "GERMANIA" and "ASRAEL" by Alberto Franchetti, born a Torinese but a Reggio man by adoption, and the ballets "COPPELIA" and "ECELSIOR" of Delibes. But Verdi, a son of the neighbouring town of Busseto, remained always the favourite. Even today, the "Reggiani" prefer their opera with plots and characters of clear definition and inspired by the elementary sentiments and passions, which,

in fact, are precisely those of the operas of Verdi.

With the disappearance of its former princely sponsors, multiplying production costs and the opening up of wider vistas as communications grew easier, the life of the theatre in Italy has become concentrated more and more in the great cities. All the same Reggio remembers its past glories. It still upholds its fame and reputation by offering fine productions of opera in its theatre. On the occasion of the Municipality's centenary in 1957 extraordinary performances were given of "FALSTAFF", "KOWANCINA", "WALKURE" and "NABUCO". Further to honour the occasion, the volume "The Theatre in Reggio Emilia" was published. Its preparation was in the hands of local students of history who, carrying on the researches of Curti, Ritorni, Crocioni and others, have added important new contributions to the history of the theatres of Reggio.

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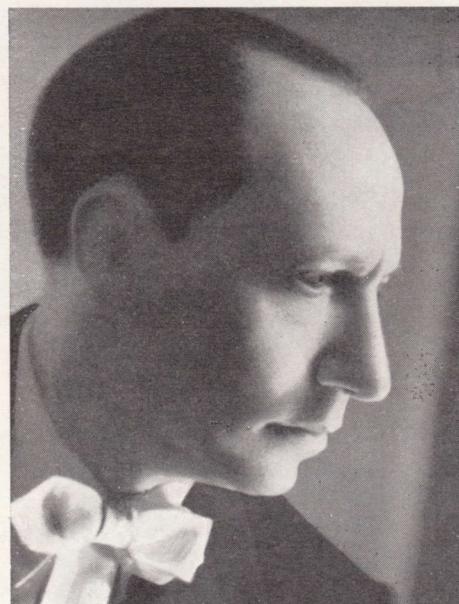
(Conductor) though born a Florentine completed his musical studies at Venice and began his conducting career at Riga in 1935. Combining work in the fields of symphonic and Opera music, he has conducted the Santa Cecilia, Vienna Symphony, Munich Philharmonic Orchestras and the orchestras of Lisbon and Madrid, and in the field of Opera, almost all the more important opera houses of Europe, in the State Operas of Vienna, Cologne, Wiesbaden and Munich and in Lisbon, Barcelona, Naples, Rome as well as at Cavacalla. In America he has directed opera at Havana, Mexico and the City Centre New York.

This is his first visit to Dublin.



MAESTRO OTTAVIO ZIINO

(Composer and Conductor). He studied composition with Antonio Savasta at the Conservatoire of Palermo, his native town. At the same time he studied law at the University of Palermo. After this he followed courses in conducting and composition at the S. Cecilia Academy in Rome under Bernardino Molinari, and Ildebrando Pizzetti. He then dedicated himself to conducting, both in the theatrical field (Rome Opera House, San Carlo, Naples, Carlo Felice Theatre, Genoa, Reggio Theatre, Parma, Bellini Theatre, Catania, Grande Theatre, Brescia, Massimo Theatre in Cagliari etc.) and in the symphonic field as well, conducting concerts in the most important institutes of Italy (National Academy of S. Cecilia in Rome, Maggio Musicale, Florence, Società Scarlatti, Naples, Festival, Venice, RAI-Radio Italiana, Massimo Palermo). He has been active abroad in both operatic and symphonic fields (France, S. America, Germany, Scandinavia, Turkey, Jugoslavia, Holland, Australia and Luxembourg). He is now the resident Director of the Symphonic Orchestra of Sicily. He has recently proved himself as a composer also.

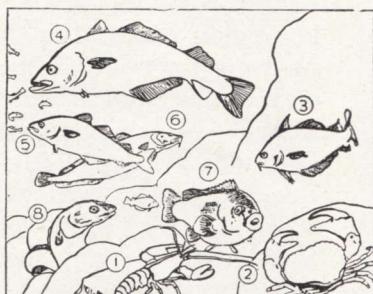


Irish Shell guide to FISH AROUND THE IRISH COAST



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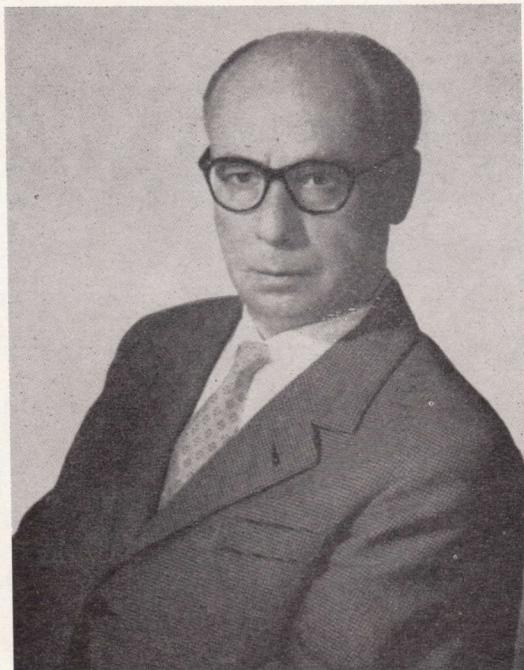
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CARDENIO BOTTI

(Manager). Maestro Botti's many activities, conductor, composer and man of theatre, are well known in Italy where he has supervised the direction of many of the principal opera houses. He completed his studies at the St. Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome. At the Royal Opera House in Malta he was first conductor for the operas and symphony concerts, and subsequently General Manager. He conducted the St. Cecilia Orchestra in Rome at various concerts in the well known Augusteo Hall. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and later of the Carlo Felice in Genoa. He has been an adjudicator at numerous contests for singers and composers and has been Director of the Organisation for the co-ordination of the great Opera Houses, controlled by the State. For nine years he has organised the visiting Italian Opera Company for the D.G.O.S. and the benefit of his long experience has considerably aided the success of the Italian Opera Festivals in Dublin.



Producer

CARLO ACLY AZZOLINI

(Producer). Studied European literature and history of art at the University of Rome. His musical education was pursued at the Conservatoire in the same City. His work as a Regisseur was interrupted soon after it began at the Fenice Theatre of Venice by the Second World War. It was resumed in 1946 at the Rome Opera and he has worked continuously there since then.

Mr. Azzolini has produced a wide range of Operas—old and modern, these latter including Pizzetti's "Straniero", Alfano's "Dr. Antonio" and Respighi's "Maria Egiziaca".

Outside Rome, Mr. Azzolini has acted as producer at the Opera House, Barcelona ("Don Carlos", "Aida" and Boito's "Mefistofele"), at the recent Festival of Wiesbaden as well as in France, Switzerland and North Africa.



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Stage Set Designer

CAMILLO PARRAVICINI

Son of Angelo Parravicini, the designer who worked for many years at La Scala, Milan, Camillo Parravicini was born in Milan in 1903, and after studying at the Accademia di Brera he became a pupil of his father and worked with him. Since 1926 he has been living in Rome where he has his own studio. Besides the Opera House in Rome, he has designed settings for some of the most important theatres in the world. For the Dublin Grand Opera Society he has provided many settings, among which we may number *Masked Ball*, *Aida*, *Andrea Chenier*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Manon Lescaut*, and those for the 1960 Festival.



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RICCARDO BOTTINO

Chorus Master

After studying pianoforte, and composition and orchestral and choral conducting under Schinelli, Bossi and Pedrollo at Parma, Maestro Bottino graduated at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, Milan. He began his career as an orchestra director and conducted in the major theatres in Italy, besides undertaking extended tours of France, Switzerland, Germany and England. Recently, however, he has devoted himself exclusively to choral conducting in which he has specialized, having acted as chorus master in important official opera seasons in Italy and abroad. He arrived in Dublin direct from the Teatro Liceo of Barcelona where he was chorus master for all operas throughout the four months opera season there.



WILLIAM RICHARDS

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Musical Director and Producer for several Welsh amateur opera societies.

Since coming to Dublin 4½ years ago, he has produced a number of plays for the St. James's Gate Drama Group and has conducted one of the musical shows in the Rupert Guinness Hall.



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MARIELLA ADANI

(Soprano). After a long period of vocal and musical studies and having won several important competitions for singers, Mariella Adani rapidly made her name in the world of Opera. Very soon she was singing at the great Festival of Aix-en-Provence, Glyndebourne, Edinburgh, etc. Her Scala début was made in 1955 in "The Marriage of Figaro". She has established herself at the Scala as one of its leading singers.



BERNADETTE GREEVY

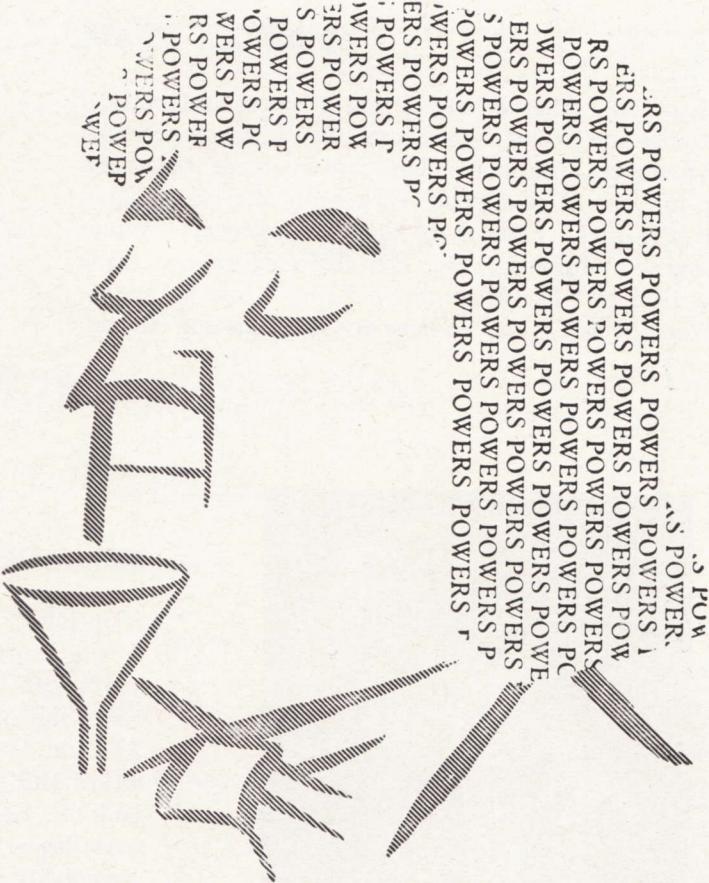
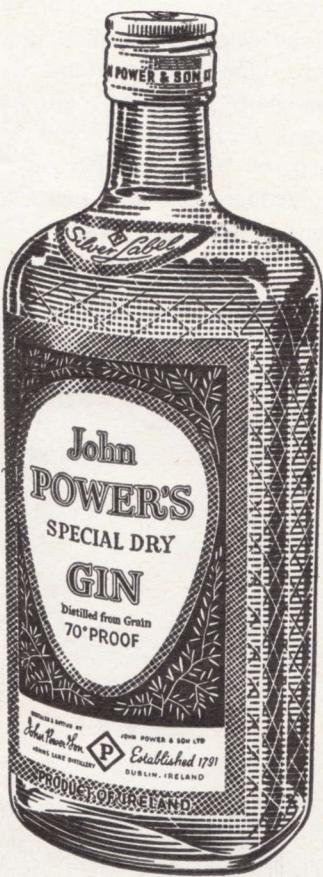
(Contralto). Was born in Dublin, and was educated at the Convent of the Holy Faith, Clontarf, where she began her musical studies. For the past four years she has been a pupil of Miss Jean Nolan. In 1958, at the Feis Ceoil she won the contralto solo award and in 1959 she won the Plunkett Green Cup and the Leider Prize. She has broadcast frequently over Radio Eireann both in recitals and with the Symphony and Light Orchestras, including a performance (in February 1960) of Beethoven Mass in C, in June the Mahler—Lieder lines Fahnenden Gesellen with Guest Conductor Walter Galht.



JOLE DI MARIA

(Mezzosoprano). Studied in Rome and made her début four years ago at the Experimentale Theatre at Spoleto. From here she was called to sing in leading Italian and foreign theatres including the Massimo of Palermo, the Bellini at Catania and at the Opera Houses of Lisbon and Cairo.

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MAFALDA MICHELUZZI

(Soprano) made her début at the Experimental Theatre of Spoleto, and having immediately established herself as an intelligent and versatile artist was soon singing at the Rome Opera, at the San Carlo, Naples, at the Massimo of Palermo, and many other theatres.

She has sung in opera seasons in Spain, Portugal, Germany and Egypt, also in several televised operas and on the radio in Italy. She sang "Nedda" in the D.G.O.S. presentation of "Pagliacci" last winter.



LUCIANA PALOMBI

(Soprano). Completed her musical studies in Rome, specialising in the secondary roles of the Italian repertoire. She has sung in many theatres with such famous artists as Maria Caniglia, Anita Cerquetti, Tagliavini, Protti, Borsò and others.

CLAUDIA PARADA

(Soprano) is a native of Chile and made her début at Santiago after having studied violin and singing there. Since 1954 Mme. Parada's career has been mainly in Italy—no easy feat for a non-Italian—where she has been singing at all the major theatres of Europe—La Scala (where she substituted La Callas) in the Verdi Operas and at Naples, Catania, Bologna, Trieste, etc. Abroad she has sung with much success in Vienna and Brussels, in Spain, North Africa and in Scandinavia.

Madame Parada sang Leonora in "Trovatore" in Dublin in the Winter Season of 1959.

Her repertoire includes Bellini's "Norma" and "I Puritani" and most of the dramatic soprano roles, "Aida" (which she will sing in Dublin) and "Norma" being her favourites.





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MYRIAM PIRAZZINI

(Mezzo soprano). An artist of international renown. She has sung at La Scala, Milan, in Rome, at the San Carlo, Naples, and in all the principal Italian and foreign theatres. She frequently takes part in the concerts of the Accademia Nazionale di S. Cecilia, and the Radio TV in Italy, and she has made several records.



LUCILLE UDOVICK

(Soprano). Born and educated in America, she has perfected her art in Italy where she has resided for several years. She is listed among the best singers of Italian opera and is world famous, singing in the leading Italian theatres, including La Scala, and in the most important musical centres of Europe.



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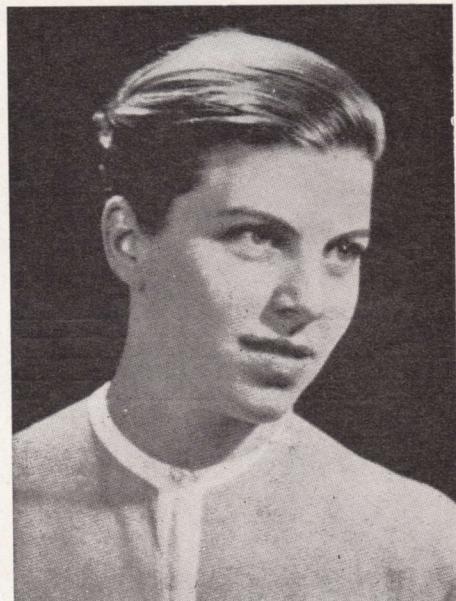
ELENA TODESCHI

(Soprano). Since her début at an early age Elena Todeschi has made a deep impression on the world of opera in Italy and abroad. She has appeared successfully at such leading Theatres as the Communale at Bologna, the Verdi at Trieste and in all the principal Opera houses of Spain and South America. This will be her Dublin début.



MARGHERITA RINALDI

(Soprano). Studied in Milan and perfected her style at the school of the famous artist Ines Adami Corradetti. Was discovered at the Spoleto competition where she won first prize. In the Teatro Sperimentale there, which is under the same direction as the Opera of Rome, she made her début in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, obtaining great praise from public and press. She was immediately called to La Scala.





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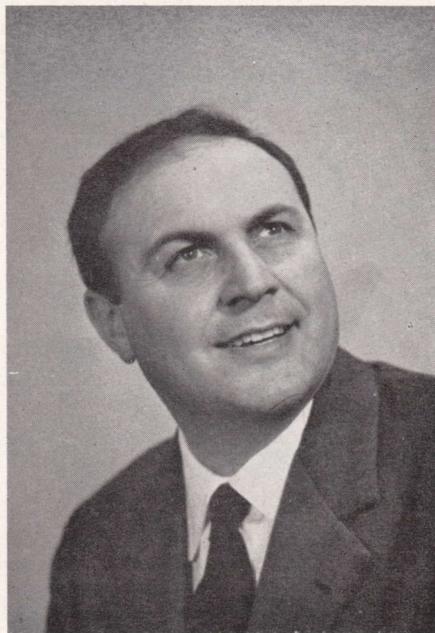
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ANGELO BARTALI

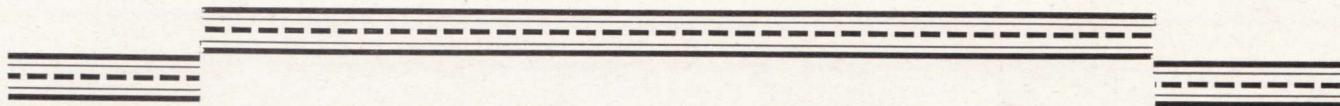
(Tenor). Five years ago he won the Spoleto Concursus and made a successful début there as Des Grieux in Puccini's "Manon Lescaut". Later he appeared in important Italian Theatres such as Bologna's Communale, Parma's Radio, and the Carlo Felice at Genoa and has sung on the Italian Radio. This will be his first appearance in Dublin.



UMBERTO BORSO

(Tenor). Made his début at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto in *La Forza del Destino*. He soon passed to L'Opera, Rome, then to La Fenice, Venice, to the Verdi, Trieste, the Massimo, Palermo, and to all the best-known Italian opera houses. He took part in an opera tournée in Australia and New Zealand, and in opera festivals in Egypt, Japan, Spain, and Holland. His most recent appearances have been in Miami (where he partnered Renata Tebaldi) and Philadelphia. After Dublin he goes to Mexico. In the season 1961-62 he will be with the Metropolitan Opera, New York.





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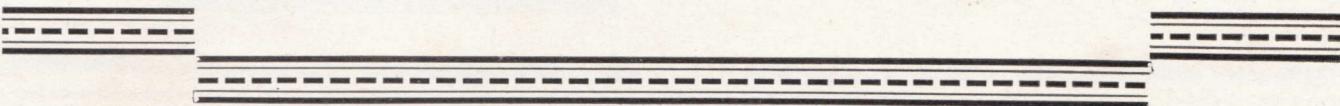
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PIERO CAPPUCILLI

(Baritone). Since his début in 1956 Piero Cappuccilli has appeared in practically every Italian opera house of importance as well as at the major theatres of Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France and Germany. Last year he was called to the Metropolitan, New York, following the sudden death of the great American baritone, Leonard Warren.

Within the past year he has sung the leading baritone rôles in the latest long-play recordings, with Maria Callas, of "Lucia di Lammermoor" and "La Gioconda" and in "The Marriage of Figaro", and "Don Giovanni", under Giulini with Sutherland, Schwarzkopf, Sciutti, Taddei, etc.

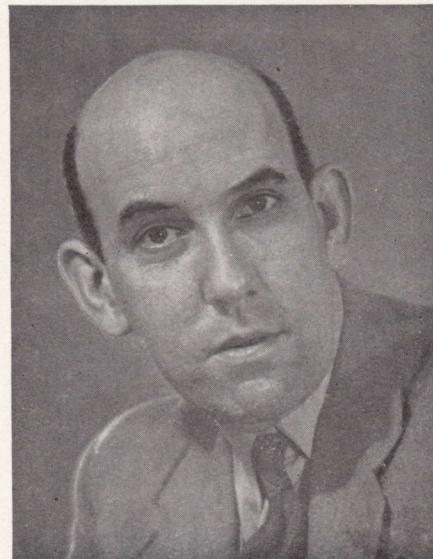


Baritone Piero Cappuccilli

BRENDAN CAVANAGH

(Tenor). Sang many secondary Tenor roles with D.G.O.S; also sang Tenor Soloist with Our Lady's Choral Society, *Messiah*, *Stabat Mater*, Verdi *Requiem*; also principal parts: *Desert Song*, *Student Prince*, *New Moon*, etc.

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ATTILIO D'ORAZI

(Baritone). Winner of the national singing competition of the Radio TV Italiana, he made his début as Figaro in the *Barber of Seville*, showing himself to be an artist of great quality. Later he sang in various opera houses in Italy and in Spain, confirming his artistry with excellent performances in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Rigoletto*, *Favorita*, *Faust*, and others.

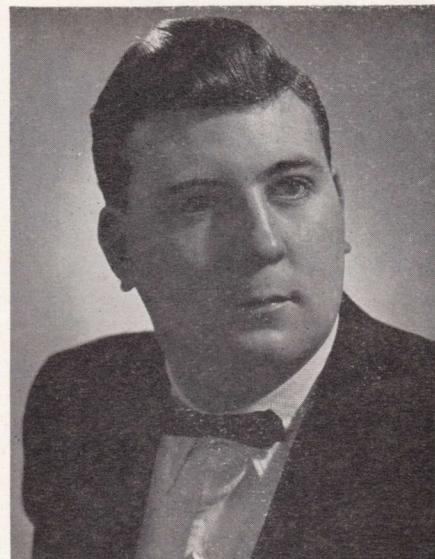


EDWIN FITZGIBBON

(Tenor). Began studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Played the Baritone lead Gellner in *La Wally* (Catalani) as a student there. After further study became Tenor and completed studies under Frederic Cox, Principal Royal Manchester College of Music. Sang "Cavaradossi" in Manchester last May—warmly praised by "Guardian" and "Daily Telegraph" critics. Will appear as Pinkerton in the Autumn in various North of England cities as guest with a new Manchester based company. Has played operetta leads (*Merry Widow*, *Showboat*), but this is his first professional operatic engagement in this country.

Was auditioned by Silveri in December. Is a frequent broadcaster from Radio Eireann, particularly "Concert Hall" series where he has been heard in arias from the principal Italian operatic composers—Puccini, Verdi, Giordano, Cilea, etc.

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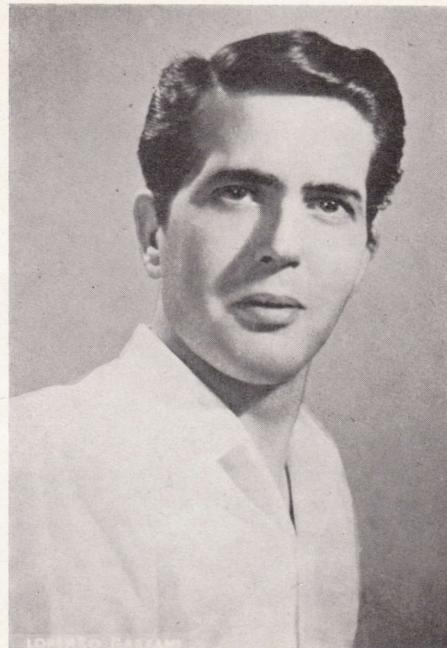
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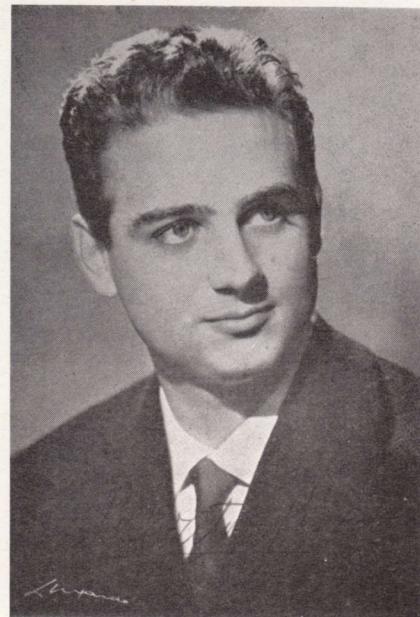
(Bass). This is the first visit to Dublin of the distinguished young bass, Lorenzo Gaetani. His career has already brought him to the "Fenice" of Venice, the "San Carlo" of Naples, the "Massino" of Palermo and the opera houses of Bologna, Catania and Trieste as well as to London, Hamburg, Dresden, Basle, Zurich, Toulouse, Marseilles and Barcelona for the Italian opera seasons there. He achieved a notable success as Philip II in "Don Carlos" at the Zürich Festival in 1960.

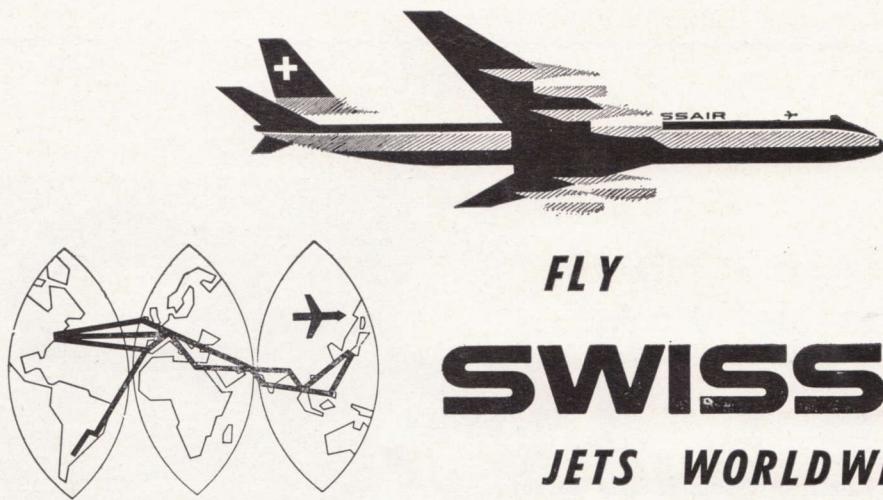
His repertoire has covered the principal bass roles in the operas of Verdi, Bellini, Donizetti, etc.



SALVATORE GIOIA

(Tenor). Was born in Sicily where he completed his classical studies and then studied singing at the Conservatoire of S. Cecilia in Rome. He won the "Gran Prix" in the International Singing Contest at Toulouse and also at Spoleto, where he made his débüt in 1956 in the opera *Matrimonio Segreto* by Cimarosa. Successively he appeared at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan singing *Elisir d'amore*; then in 1957 he was invited to La Scala to sing Rossini's *Count Ory*. Since then he has sung in the opera houses of Turin, Florence, Baden, Paris and others. He has taken part in operatic and symphonic concerts for the Italian radio, and has recorded for "Cetra" and "Orpheus."



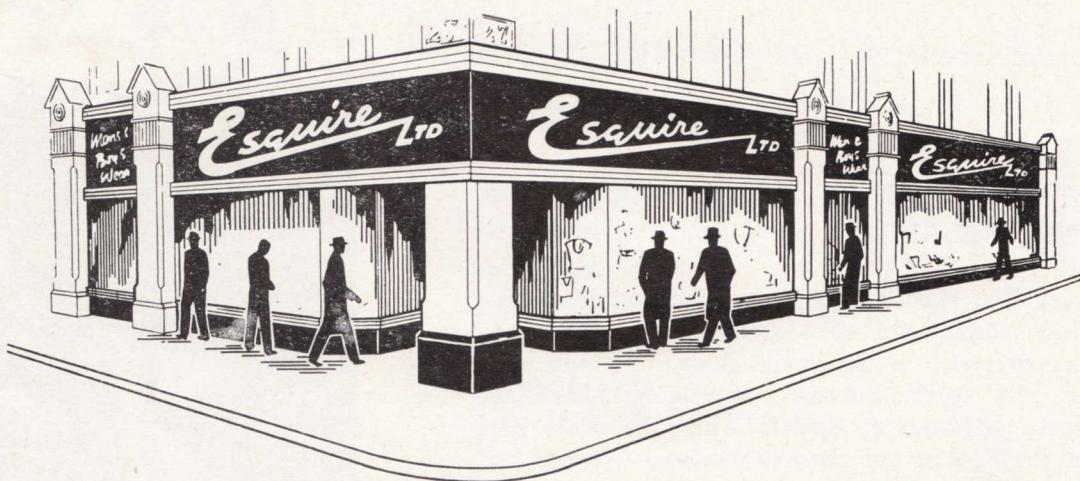


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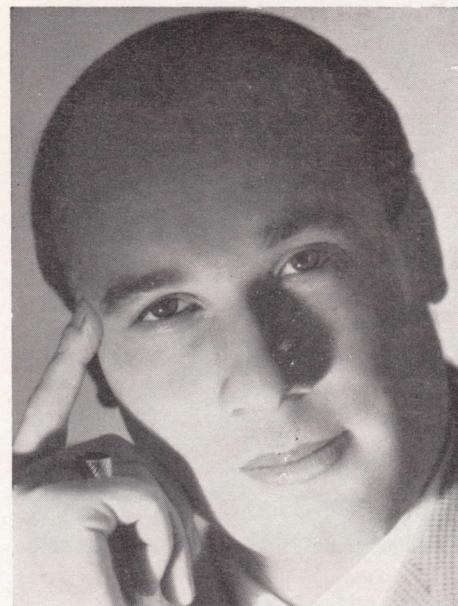
ANTONIO GALIE

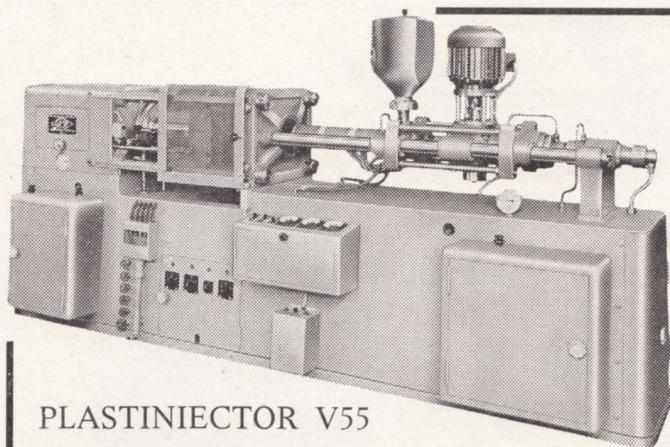
(Tenor), having completed his musical studies in Rome he was selected by the Teatro Sperimentale to make his début in Spoleto, with Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*. Due to the personal success obtained in the title role, he was immediately engaged to sing the same opera at the Opera House, Rome, with the famous Renata Tebaldi. Subsequently he has performed in many of the important opera houses of Italy (Rome, Naples, Palermo, Bologna, Genoa) and abroad (Egypt, Germany, France, Ireland).



LORIS GAMBELLI

(Bass). Was born in Rome and studied under the famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano, and there made his début in Donizetti's *La Favorita*. He has since sung in many other Italian opera houses, including the Grande in Brescia and the Sociale in Mantova. Abroad he has taken part in the seasons in Madrid and in Dublin.





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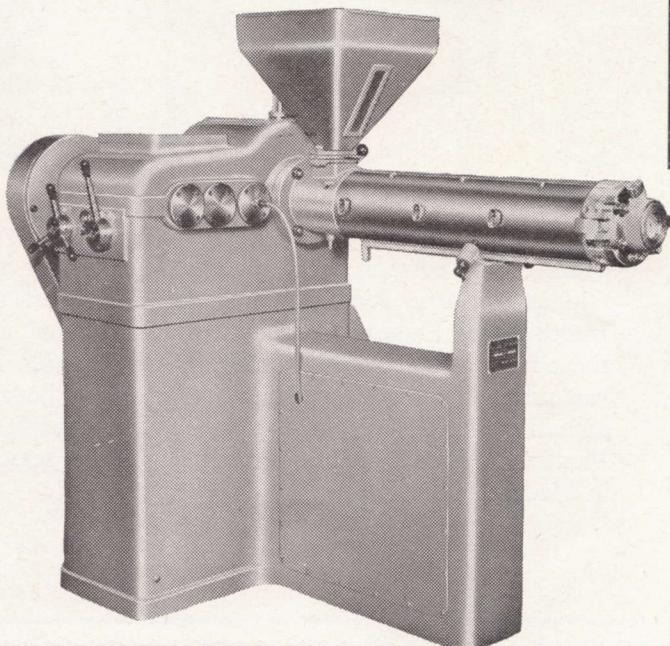


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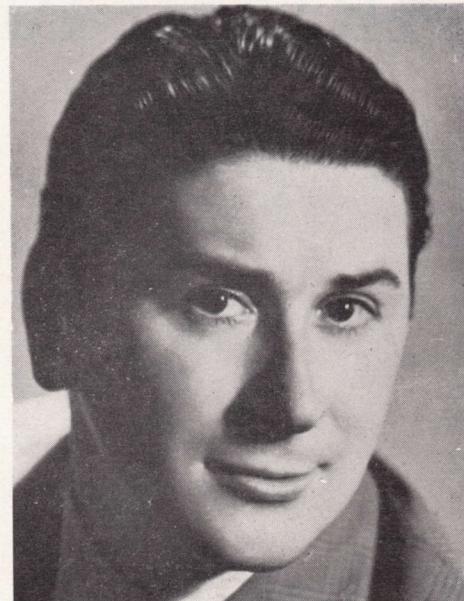
(Bass) completed his studies in Venice and was noted for his natural artistic sensitivity and for his fluid style. He is particularly adapted for comic parts. He has sung in the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, in various opera houses of Northern Italy and two years ago he sang in the Italian Operas at the International Festival in Wiesbaden. In 1957 he won the *bel canto* competition sponsored by the Italian Radio TV; also made his début at the Experimental Theatre of Spoleto with the opera "Il Matrimonio Segreto."



LEO PUDIS

(Bass) has sung with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome, and at the principal Theatres of Italy, the Fenice of Venice, the Verdi of Trieste, Massimo of Palermo, Bellini of Catania and at the Radio Italiana Opera seasons. He has also appeared in buffo roles at the Opera houses of Lisbon and Brussels and in season at the Stoll Theatre, London. He has appeared in concerts in Paris, Geneva, Zurich and Amsterdam.

Leo Pudis is at present a leading buffo bass at the Stadische Oper Berlin.





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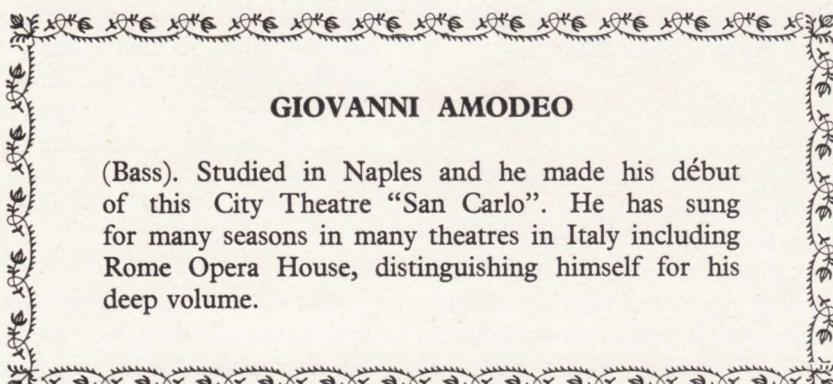


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ERNESTO VEZZOSI

(Baritone). Made his début at the Teatro Reggio in Parma and then passed on to the Fenice in Venice, the Verdi in Trieste, the S. Carlo in Naples and others. Has taken part in tournées in Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, England and Ireland.



GIOVANNI AMODEO

(Bass). Studied in Naples and he made his début of this City Theatre "San Carlo". He has sung for many seasons in many theatres in Italy including Rome Opera House, distinguishing himself for his deep volume.



AÏDA

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

Aida was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt for the Opera House, Cairo, where it was first performed in December, 1871. The composer was then in his late fifties. *Aida* was to be followed after long intervals by *Otello* and *Falstaff*. These three belong to Verdi's greatest period and represent the full maturity of his genius and experience. The "scenario" for *Aida* and the authentic local colour were furnished by the French Egyptologist, Mariette Bey. Verdi and Camille du Locle together worked on the original libretto, which was in French. The final version in Italian was produced by Antonio Ghislanzoni.

ACT I

After the brief subdued prelude a hall in the palace of Memphis is disclosed. Radames (Tenor), Captain of the Guard, is told by Ramphis (Bass), High Priest of Egypt, of the rumoured invasion by the Ethiopians of the sacred soil of Egypt and that the oracle of Isis has already named the Egyptian Commander. Radames, in the aria *Celeste Aida*, wishes that he might be the chosen warrior so that by his victories he might win Aida and free her from slavery. It is unknown in Egypt that Aïda, favourite slave of Amneris, is the captive daughter of the Ethiopian King, Amonasro. Amneris (Mezzo-soprano), daughter of the King of Egypt, enters, soon followed by Aïda (Soprano). Amneris is tormented in her secret love for Radames by suspicions that he, instead, is in love with Aïda—suspicions which are strengthened

by the glances she sees exchanged between the two. Masking her anger, Amneris affects sympathy and friendship for Aïda. News of the invasion (led by Amonasro) is confirmed by a Messenger (Tenor). The King (Bass) proclaims Radames to be the chosen leader. To the strains of a solemn march all repair to the Temple for Radames' investiture. Aida, alone, re-echoes the cry *Ritorna vincitor* ("Return victorious") and her succeeding aria is the distraught expression of the conflict within her—love for Radames, the Egyptian, warring with the love for her father, brothers and fellow countrymen who will be his opponents in the coming battle.

The scene moves to the Temple of Vulcan where with ceremonial chant and ritual dance Radames is solemnly invested as commander while victory for the Egyptian army is implored of the deity Phtha.

ACT II

Victory is to the Egyptians, and Amneris, in her apartment in the palace at Thebes, is being arrayed by her slaves for the ceremonial reception of the triumphant army and its leader. African slave boys dance before her. Only Aïda is still unaware of the victory and Amneris decides that the moment has come to probe her heart. Craftily she lies that the Egyptians have been routed and that Radames is dead. From Aïda's despair at this cruel news and her great cry of joy when told of the deception, Amneris learns what she has dreaded to know. In a frenzy of rage and jealousy she taunts the wretched



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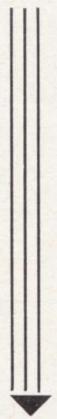
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Aïda with her servitude. As the slave that she is, Aïda shall attend her, Amneris, the daughter of the Pharaohs, when from her throne beside the King she places the laurels of victory on Radames' brow.

The "Triumph Scene" that ensues is one of the most spectacular in all opera, engaging the full technical and musical resources of the theatre. At the gates of Thebes Radames and his soldiers are received in splendour. Radames is invited by the King to ask what favour he pleases. He first asks that the captives be brought in. Amongst them is Amonasro (Baritone), disguised, who admits only to be an officer and Aïda's father. Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, he says, fell in the battle. Radames' petition is that the captives be released. At the demand of Ramphis and the priests, however, Amonasro and Aïda are held as hostages to peace. Finally, on the saviour of his country the King bestows the hand of Amneris—together one day they shall rule Egypt. With Amneris exulting over her unhappy rival and with demonstrations of popular joy (Chorus: *Gloria all' Egitto*) the curtain falls.



ACT III

A moonlit scene by the banks of the Nile. Amneris passes on her way to spend the vigil of her marriage in the Temple of Isis. Aïda steals in to keep a last tryst with Radames before she seeks peace and oblivion beneath the dark waters of the Nile. The aria *O patria mia* is a sad farewell to the fatherland she shall never see again. (Note the nostalgic effect created by oboe, clarinets and bassoon). Amonasro joins her and in their exceedingly dramatic duet unfolds a stratagem of escape, of turning defeat into victory and of restoring Radames to Aïda. If she would entice Radames to fly with her and to learn from him which mountain pass the Egyptians will use to march against the resurgent Ethiopians then victory would be assured. Aïda recoils from the suggestion but consents at last when Amonasro furiously rejects her—"You are not my daughter, you are the slave of the Egyptians!" Radames, seduced by his passion for Aïda, falls into the snare. Unguardedly he names the secret route of the Egyptian forces. At his words "the gorge of Napata" the listening Amonasro reveals both himself and his true status. From the temple Amneris and the High Priest too have overheard. The Guard is alerted. Amonasro and Aïda disappear into the darkness. Radames, accused of treason, surrenders his sword to the High Priest.

ACT IV

In a sombre hall of the palace Amneris awaits the passage of Radames to trial for high treason. This scene is dominated by Amneris. Agonised by remorse for the destruction her jealous rage has brought on Radames she implores him to defend himself at the trial and in return for his love she will contrive his pardon. But Radames believes Aïda is dead and would welcome death himself to expiate his crime. It makes no difference that Amneris admits Aïda to be still alive. Silent before the priests, his judges, Radames is sentenced to be buried alive. Vainly Amneris rages against the priests (*Empia razza*) and the close of the scene leaves her alone and desolate. The music of this episode is highly charged with emotion and the scene demands great singing from the mezzo-soprano.

The last scene is a divided one. Above is the Temple of Vulcan; below the dark airless tomb where Radames has been enclosed. From the shades behind him a form emerges—Aïda, who has concealed herself there in order to die along with him. Together they sing their ecstatic farewell to earth in the duet *O terra addio* which fades upon the muted ethereal strings of the orchestra and the broken words of Amneris praying that Isis may grant peace to her beloved.

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During the Bronze Age, 900 B.C. to 350 B.C., Ireland was the source of supply to Europe of finely-wrought, horn-shaped trumpets. In no country in Europe is the antiquity of the harp thrown so far back in the regions of history as in Ireland. It is recorded that among the retinue of Conaire Mor, who was killed in the year 33 B.C., were "nine pipe-players and nine harpers." Of the two most ancient European pictures of harpers, both of the 9th century, one occurs in an Irish work of art, the Shrine of St. Moedoc. Two specimens of harps are noteworthy, the O'Neill harp made in the 15th century, and popularly known as the "Brian Boru" harp. It is preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, and served as the model for our coinage. The other is the "Dalway Harp" made in 1621 by Donnchadh FitzTeige. The Bagpipe is also of great antiquity in Ireland, being referred to in the Brehon Laws of the 5th century. On the crosses of Monasterboice and Clonmacnoise pipers are sculptured. Bagpipes were of two kinds, one inflated with the mouth, the other with a bellows. The term "Uilleann" did not come into use before 1584. The present day Uilleann or "Union" pipes were developed early in the 18th century. During this century also violins, spinets, and pianofortes were made in Dublin.

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MANON LESCAUT

(GIACOMO PUCCINI) 1858-1924

Manon Lescaut, which was first performed at the Teatro Regio, Turin, on the 1st February, 1893, was Puccini's first real success. The work is prodigal in Puccini's characteristic melodies. The four acts are episodic in character. The setting is eighteenth century France. Libretto based on Prévost's novel.

ACT I

The scene is the square before an Inn at Amiens where students, soldiers and townspeople await the arrival of the stage coach. Edmondo (Tenor), a student, sings a humorous solo with chorus of students and girls. The Chevalier Des Grieux (Tenor) joins them and contributes a bantering address to the girls (*Tra voi, belle*). Soon the coach arrives. Manon, her officer brother Lescaut (Baritone), and the elderly Geronte, the Treasurer General (Bass), alight. Des Grieux is immediately attracted to Manon. As soon as she is alone he presents his admiring compliments. She is pleased by his attentions but tells him how on the morrow she will be lodged, unwillingly, by her brother in a convent in compliance with her father's wishes. Before entering the inn, however, she promises to meet him again that evening. In the aria that follows (*Donna non vidi mai*), which is typical Puccini, Des Grieux sings of her beauty. He in his turn is then subjected to banter by Edmondo and the students on being so obviously smitten.

The elderly Geronte is also interested and with the complaisance of Lescaut he is planning to abduct Manon. Calling aside the innkeeper he arranges for a coach and fast horses to Paris within the hour. Edmondo overhears and warns Des Grieux. Manon, re-appearing, is told by Des Grieux of the plot against her and in the following duet is persuaded to elope with him. This they do, aided by Edmondo, in the same coach that Geronte had ordered. Amidst the general derision Lescaut hints broadly to the furious Geronte that Manon might soon be enticed away

from the impecunious Des Grieux by the good times a wealthy protector could provide.

ACT II

Manon has indeed left Des Grieux already and has been installed in Geronte's handsome house in Paris. She is at her dressing table. Lescaut compliments her on how charming she looks and on her present good fortune for which he claims some credit (*Sei splendida e lucente*). Manon has the grace to regret leaving Des Grieux without a word of farewell and in the lovely and justly famous *In quelle trine morbide* she admits that "*in these soft silken rooms there's a silence, there's a chill that freezes. . . .*" and that her present luxury is but poor substitute for Des Grieux whom she still loves. When she asks for news of him, Lescaut replies that Des Grieux is now in easy circumstances, having learned how to cheat at the gaming tables, and that he constantly talks of her and may even seek her out again. Now singers come to amuse Manon and a dancing master to instruct her in the minuet. She sings a gavotte. When all have gone Des Grieux (smuggled in by Lescaut) suddenly enters. After the first reproaches the rift is soon healed and together they launch into the rapturous duet *O tentatrice*. The pair are, however, surprised by Geronte who, though affecting a dignified withdrawal, rushes off to denounce Manon to the police as a mondaine. In his brief absence the pair might have made good their escape but Manon's cupidity once more betrays her. The delay in collecting her jewels is fatal, the police are in the house and Manon is arrested.

ACT III

In the famous intermezzo Puccini paints the scene for us—Le Havre, the adjacent prison and the waiting convict ship. Des Grieux and Lescaut have a plan to rescue Manon from the prison but it fails. The other wretched women to be deported with her are

(Continued on page 65)

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IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO

DOMENICO CIMAROSA, 1749-1801

Cimarosa was born in Naples and died in Venice. He was Court composer to Catherine the Great of Russia and to Leopold II of Austria.

His two-act comedy "*Il Matrimonio Segreto*" (Libretto by Bertati) received its first performance at the Court Theatre in Vienna in 1792 and it so pleased the Emperor that he ordered it to be sung all over again as soon as the musicians had had their supper! Cimarosa was a contemporary Mozart and he has been called "the Italian Mozart" because of a certain similarity of style and because of the light-hearted brilliance of their music.

"The Secret Marriage" is still very popular on the Continent and it was the opera chosen for the inauguration in 1955 of the Piccola Scala—the small theatre constructed within the fabric of the great Scala itself for "intimate" opera.

The action of the opera takes place in Bologna.

In their opening duet Paolino (tenor) and Carolina (soprano), one of the daughters of the wealthy bourgeois Geronimo (baritone), reveal that they have been married—but, in secret, because Carolina's socially ambitious father wishes to marry both of his daughters into the nobility. In order to be near Carolina, Paolino has taken service in her father's house. Hoping to find favour with old Geronimo, Paolino has persuaded a friend of his, Count (sic) Robinson, a fortune-hunting expatriate English "milord", to sue for the hand of Geronimo's other daughter Elisetta on whom her father has settled a large dowry.

Paolino presents to Geronimo the Count's letter containing the formal offer for the hand of Elisetta (soprano). Everybody is very excited by this event and particularly Elisetta who already begins to give herself airs at the prospect of becoming a countess.

The situation becomes rather complicated on the ceremonious arrival of Count Robinson (bass) who has not yet met his betrothed and does not much like her when he does. He greatly prefers Carolina.

Naturally Carolina has to discourage him all she can—she would be unworthy of him, knowing no French but "Monsieur" and no English but "How do you do"! Elisetta is piqued; Paolino shows signs of jealousy and both Geronimo (who is deaf into the bargain) and his sister, Fidalma (mezzo-soprano), the girls' aunt, are perplexed. They express their feelings in a quartet.

Robinson is, however, determined that Carolina is to be his bride. Geronimo withdraws his objections, provided Elisetta agrees also, on the Count's offering to take a smaller dowry with Carolina.

Paolino turns in despair for help to Fidalma only to meet a fresh complication. The mature widow is in love with him and foolishly believes her sentiments to be reciprocated. This she confides to Carolina who has surprised the pair together and believes herself deceived by Paolino.

Meanwhile the Count is trying to fend off Elisetta. The latter is extremely mortified by the Count's coldness and jealous of her sister. She finds an ally in Fidalma and together they persuade Geronimo that Carolina is behaving shamelessly and should be sent into a convent out of the way. Carolina is distraught at the news of this decision. She is about to explain to the Count how matters really stand but is put off by the entry of Elisetta and her aunt.

Paolino proposes elopement as the only way out of their troubles (Aria: "*Cheti, cheti*"). That night as the pair are about to escape, they find Elisetta on the prowl. She is convinced that she will find the Count in Carolina's room and hopes to disgrace her sister before the family. She enlists Geronimo and Fidalma as witnesses. But the results of the midnight inspection are unexpected. The Count issues from his own room and Carolina and Paolino are discovered in Carolina's. The pair make a clean breast of their clandestine marriage. The Count, now reconciled to taking Elisetta, supports the couple's pleas for Geronimo's pardon. This Geronimo, making the best of things, grants and all ends happily enough.



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NORMA

VINCENZO BELLINI, 1802-1835

“NORMA”, Bellini’s best known work and his masterpiece, was first performed at the Scala on St. Stephen’s Day, 1831. It contains some of the most technically difficult music for soprano that exists as it was written for a type of voice that was common enough in Bellini’s day but is rare to-day. This was the dramatic soprano “*d’agilità*” of which Malibran, Pasta and Grisi were examples. To the power and colour of the dramatic voice were allied the extended range and the capacity to sing “*fioriture*”—the runs, trills, staccati and other flourishes now usually associated with the coloratura soprano.

The opera’s present-day popularity is mainly due to the great performances of Maria Callas as Norma.

Felice Romani was the librettist. The events take place during the Roman occupation of Gaul in the first century B.C.

ACT I

The sacred grove of the Druids at night. At the foot of an oak tree is the stone altar of the god Irminsul. To the strains of a solemn march the Gauls file in followed by their chief Druid, Oroveso. After the opening chorus, Oroveso (bass) announces—(Cavatina—“*Ite sul colle, O Druidi*”)—that when the moon rises his daughter Norma, the High Priestess, will approach Irminsul’s altar to learn from the god when the moment will come for the Gauls to revolt and throw off the yoke of their Roman oppressors.

When the crowd disperses Pollione (tenor), the Roman Pro-Consul, enters cautiously and confides to his friend Flavio (tenor)—(Cavatina—“*Meco all’altar di Venere*”)—that he no longer loves Norma who, vestal vows broken, is the mother of his two children. He has transferred his affections to the younger Druidess Adalgisa and well knows that this desertion will excite the vengeful wrath of Norma.

Both leave as the brazen trumpets herald the arrival of Norma (soprano) to perform the sacred rites (Chorus—“*Norma viene*”). Norma is, however, moved more by her clandestine love for Pollione, the Roman, than by the patriotic desire of her father and her people for the immediate revolt against the Roman

invaders which might destroy Pollione. So, angrily Norma forbids all thought of war and when questioned about the will of Irminsul in the matter she interprets it (“*Io ne’ volumi arcani leggo del ciel*”—I read it in the secret volumes of heaven)—that Rome shall be destroyed not by the Gauls but by its own vices. Disdaining the disappointed protests of the priests and people Norma turns to the altar and, with a golden sickle cutting a branch of mistletoe, initiates the rite in honour of the Moon goddess. In the flowing andante measures of the sublime “*Casta Diva*” she implores peace for Gaul until the time appointed by the gods for war. The andante is followed immediately by the allegro “*Ah! bello a me ritorna*” wherein, as an aside, Norma switches to an impassioned expression of her love for Pollione and longing for a return of the happier days before his love for her had cooled.

When all have left Adalgisa (mezzo-soprano) enters to beg forgiveness before the altar of Irminsul for her broken vows—for she too loves Pollione. As she prays she is disturbed by Pollione himself. In the scene and duet that follows (“*Va, crudele, al dio spietato*”) he urges her to fly with him to Rome. His importunities finally persuade her to abandon the temple and she promises to go with him.

ACT II

Norma’s dwelling. Norma enters leading by the hand her two children. To her attendant Clotilde (soprano) she confides her fear that Pollione, who has been recalled to Rome, intends to desert herself and her children in Gaul.

Adalgisa approaches and, prostrate before her superior Norma, confesses her broken vows and the promise she has given to her (unnamed) Roman lover to fly with him from Gaul. Norma, not suspecting that Adalgisa’s lover is Pollione, listens with sympathy though abstractedly to Adalgisa’s narrative for it revives the memory of her own secret surrender to a Roman (Duet: *Oh! rimembranza, io fui così sedotta*—“Oh fond remembrance, thus was I too beguiled”). But later, to Norma’s horror, Adalgisa identifies

(Continued on page 65)

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Pollione, when he enters, as her unnamed lover. Norma's anger blazes out in the passage "Ah, non tremar . . . O perfido!" which leads into the exciting trio where Norma denounces her betrayer to Adalgisa. The trio ends in a stretto as the two women heap imprecations on Pollione—Adalgisa rejecting him for his perfidy to Norma and Norma vowing that her vengeance will pursue him wherever he may go.

ACT III

Again Norma's dwelling. It is night. Norma enters, dagger in hand. Wild with rage and humiliation, she has resolved to kill herself and her children too rather than leave them to the fate that surely awaits them—to be outcasts in Gaul or the slaves of a Roman step-mother. But her heart melts as she contemplates the sleeping children. Summoning Adalgisa she charges her to bring them to their father, Pollione, in the Roman Camp and then escape with him from Gaul as his spouse adding the wish that he would be kinder to Adalgisa than he was to herself ("Sposo ti sia men crudo"). Adalgisa's reply is that she will indeed go to the Roman Camp but only to renounce Pollione finally and entreat him to be reconciled with Norma. In the course of the great (and famous) duet ("Mira, O Norma. . . questi cari tuoi pargoletti"—Behold, Oh Norma, these little ones before you kneeling") Adalgisa dissuades Norma from her death resolve for the children's sake and through her own renunciation of Pollione breaks down Norma's proud resistance to her proposed attempt to reconcile the two.

ACT IV

Scene 1 is short and is in the Druids sacred grove where druids and warriors meet. Gaul is growing restive under inaction—(Chorus: "Un breve incampo"). In the aria ("Ah! del Tebro il giogo indegno") Oroveso tells the warriors of the new and more terrible Roman tyrant who will succeed Pollione. Norma no longer receives inspiration from the gods but let them nurse and dissimulate their hate until the hour of revolt, now imminent, has struck.

Scene 2 is before the temple of Irminsul where Norma impatiently awaits Adalgisa's return from Pollione. Clotilde hastens in to tell her that Adalgisa has returned but that Pollione plans to carry her away with him by force. Hearing this and believing herself deceived by Adalgisa too, Norma rushes to the altar in blind rage and three times strikes the bronze shield that summons the warriors to war. The druids and warriors stream in at the long-awaited signal and Norma fiercely incites them to a massacre of all the Romans in Gaul. As Oroveso demands of Norma who shall be the victim to be offered to the gods for victory in the conflict, Clotilde brings the

news that a Roman has broken into the sacred enclosure of the temple virgins. The offender is brought in—it is Pollione. Death is the penalty for his sacrilege but Norma dismisses the assemblage in order to be alone with him for a time. Contemptuously she confronts him. At last he is in her hands ("In mia man alfin tu sei"). She alone can save him from the death that awaits him—if he will swear to give up Adalgisa. He refuses. But she can strike him by killing their children and having Adalgisa consigned to the sacrificial flames for treason and profanation of her temple vows. Pollione offers his own life to save them.

Recalling the druids and warriors, Norma announces that she has found a victim—a faithless priestess who has betrayed her country and her vows. The victim she offers is not Adalgisa but herself. Removing the vestal garland from her brow, she confesses her clandestine liaison with the Roman enemy and to be the mother of his two children.

The opera moves forward to the tremendous choral finale with the inevitability of Greek tragedy and with the grandeur of the music worthily matching the drama as Norma mounts the burning pyre side by side with Pollione who now recognises his own baseness and the sublime character of the woman he had abandoned.



MANON LESCAUT

(Continued from page 59)

embarked for the New World to the degrading comments of the crowd. Des Grieux and Manon, however, excite its compassion and the Captain of the ship yields to Des Grieux's frantic plea (*Guardate, pazzo son*) to be allowed aboard even as a deckhand. The Act closes to the *motif* of the Love Duet in Act II.

ACT IV

Near New Orleans. Manon and Des Grieux have finally escaped but their flight has only brought them to a bare and empty place which is the expression of their own desolation. In their brief duet the exhausted Manon reflects upon her own past selfishness and folly and entreats her lover to save himself. Des Grieux goes in search of help and shelter for both of them and finds none. Alone in the falling night, Manon, broken in body and spirit, despairingly realises that her end is near (Aria: *Sola, perduta, abbandonata*—"Alone, deserted and degraded"). Des Grieux returns to find the chill of death already upon her. She dies with the words "My faults oblivion shall wipe out, but not my love. . . ."

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RIGOLETTO

GUIDEPPE VERDI, 1813 - 1901

This opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its premiere in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertoire as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Franco Maria Piave is an adaptation of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.



ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palazzo. The dissolute Duke of Mantua (Tenor) enters telling a courtier, Borsa, of his latest infatuation—this time with an unknown girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. Just now, however, he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano (Mezzo soprano) to the obvious annoyance of her husband. In the flippant aria *Questa o quella* ("This one or that one") the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if only they are pretty. Ceprano (Bass) is taunted by Rigoletto, (Baritone), the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically Rigoletto suggests to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo (Bass) amuses the others with the story that the buffoon has an innamorata! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone (Baritone) forces his way in to denounce the Duke, the betrayer of his daughter. He too is cruelly mocked

by Rigoletto, but before being dragged away the old man launches a father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious fear.

ACT II

The double setting shows a street and, opening off it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein his treasured daughter Gilda (Soprano) is kept in strict seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on Monterone's curse which haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers have taken to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile (Bass), a professional hired assassin. To Sparafucile's offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present use for them. Alone, in the splendid aria *Pari siamo*, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and his ignominious employment in the Duke's household. A very beautiful duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling to which he now gains entry while Rigoletto is still in the house by bribing Giovanna (Mezzo-soprano), Gilda's duenna. He remains concealed in the courtyard. Before leaving, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke tells Gilda that he is Gualtier Malde, the supposed student whom she has often noticed in the church. A love duet follows (*E il sol dell'anima*). The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria *Caro nome* the young girl muses on her first love. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escapade not suspecting its true purpose. When he discovers the outrage he recalls the curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry *La maledizione!*

ACT III

In the aria *Parmi veder le lagrime* the Duke laments the loss of Gilda, disappeared he knows not where. The courtiers, however, come to tell him of the trick played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palace. After the Duke's exit, in search of Gilda, Rigoletto appears distractedly searching for his daughter and suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals for pity to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, rails against the baseness of these courtiers and furiously orders them from his presence (*Corteggiani vil razza dannata*). Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, seeks to soften his anger.

ACT IV

Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely dilapidated inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke has found another charmer, Maddalena

(Mezzo-soprano), the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and gambling. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women (*La donna è mobile*). This aria leads into the great quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered to himself in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn and retires. Maddalena, who has succumbed to the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he substituted another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has, however, stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus it is she who becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that is delivered to her father. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke reaches him in a reprise of *La donna è mobile*. He tears open the sack and the dying Gilda is revealed. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The Opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse—*La maledizione*—which has exacted the full penalty.

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DON PASQUALE

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797-1848

Born in the North Italian town of Bergamo where he is commemorated by the beautiful Theatre bearing his name, Gaetano Donizetti was the composer of nearly seventy operas. About six of these have retained their place in the popular repertory. *Don Pasquale*, in *buffo* vein, is rated by many as the composer's best work. Its brilliant score is matched by the natural wit and comedy of an excellent, if conventional, libretto.

Don Pasquale was first performed in Paris in January, 1843. The scene is laid in Rome in the early nineteenth century. There are three Acts.



ACT I

The scintillating Overture establishes a cheerful mood and the curtain rises on a room in Don Pasquale's house. The Don (Bass)—a stock figure in early comedy—is old and crusty, but contemplates matrimony. We find him awaiting his friend and confidant, Doctor Malatesta, whom he has entrusted with the office of finding him a suitable bride. The Doctor (Baritone) soon arrives. Having failed to dissuade Pasquale from his silly idea of marrying so late in life and in order (as we shall see) to help Ernesto, Pasquale's nephew, Malatesta has devised a complicated plan to circumvent the marriage. Pursuing this plan, he tells Pasquale that he has found the very wife for him—a lovely young creature, still in a convent school, as good as she is beautiful, and, incidentally, the Doctor's own sister Norina, alias Sofronia. Malatesta's description of her in his aria, *Bella siccome un angelo* ("Sweet as an angel") so entrances Pasquale that Malatesta is sent off to produce

this paragon at once. The Don, alone, foolishly pictures himself as a fiery romantic bridegroom ("Ah, un fuoco insolito!") and relishes the prospect of the setback his marriage will mean to his impertinent young nephew, Ernesto, and his expectations. When Ernesto (Tenor) enters the old man discourses on his favourite topic, the necessity of Ernesto marrying a certain wealthy lady. But Ernesto will not hear of it because he, already loves another—Norina. Greatly annoyed, Pasquale announces his own proposed marriage, tells Ernesto that he will have to leave the house and disinherits him as well. All this emerges in their duet which is introduced by Ernesto's bewailing this shattering of his dreams in the delicate aria, "*Sogno soave e casto*". The young man is further disillusioned when he hears that Doctor Malatesta, on whose support he had been counting, now appears to be abetting his uncle's marriage.

The second scene introduces Ernesto's sweetheart, Norina (Soprano), in her own house. We find her reading a romantic novel and musing over a tender love passage in the cavatina, "*Quel guardo, il cavaliere*". A dismaying letter arrives from Ernesto and soon after it Doctor Malatesta. He has come to explain to Norina how he proposes to avert the serious difficulties which Pasquale's marriage would create for Ernesto and herself. He hopes to cure Pasquale finally of this foolishness by arranging for him a mock marriage. Norina will be passed off as Malatesta's sister, Sofronia, in the role of "bride" while his cousin will masquerade as the Notary. The ceremony over, it will be up to Norina herself to make life so miserable for Pasquale that he will be only too glad after his experience to renounce all matrimonial ambitions when, in due time, he learns that the marriage was bogus. Norina enters into the spirit of the thing and in the merry duet, "*Pronta io son*," Malatesta rehearses her in the role she is to play.

ACT II

Ernesto is preparing to leave Pasquale's house dejectedly proclaiming in the aria, "Cercherò lontana terra", his firm intention of setting off to end his days in some foreign land. On his exit, Pasquale comes in preening himself and very satisfied with the fine figure he believes he still cuts at 70 years of age. Malatesta duly arrives with Norina, the "bride". Pasquale is much gratified at the excessive modesty of her demeanour though she obstinately refuses to remove her heavy veil. When she does so at last, the Don is so entranced by her beauty that he wants the marriage to take place there and then. The counterfeit contract is drawn up with Pasquale directing the insertion of the clause that his lovely young wife shall be mistress of all his property. The unexpected appearance of Ernesto, ignorant of the plot and about to make a scene, threatens to upset all Malatesta's work. The Doctor, however, manages to put Ernesto "au courant" with what is really happening so that he is even persuaded to act as witness.

No sooner is the ceremony over than Norina suddenly turns tartar and takes over control. First, she cancels Pasquale's order that Ernesto must leave the house—her husband is so infirm that she will need Ernesto as escort. Next, the establishment must be entirely refurnished; six horses and two carriages are to be ordered and at least twenty-four extra servants engaged—all young and handsome. The Act ends in a quartet where each character expresses his or her reactions to this sensational turn of events.



ACT III

Pasquale's house again. Norina is revelling in a tremendous spending spree, indifferent to Pasquale's mounting rage as he tots up the fabulous bills. Worse still, she is preparing to go to the theatre without him.

His attempts to prevent her earns for poor Pasquale a heap of abuse and a slap across the face. After a moment's remorse at having overplayed her hand in striking the old man, Norina trips off telling Pasquale that at his age it would suit him best to go to bed. As she goes, she purposely drops a letter. From this the Don learns that Norina is to have an assignation that very evening in his own garden, the lover's signal to be a serenade. For Pasquale this is the last straw and he sends for Malatesta to advise him about a divorce. When he has left, the army of new servants assemble, and in an amusing chorus they discuss the recent goings-on in the house, the while admonishing each other to be prudent as this employment is far too amusing and profitable to lose. From a brief exchange between Ernesto and Malatesta it emerges that the letter Pasquale found is all part of Malatesta's plan. Ernesto exits hastily as Pasquale approaches to unburden his woes to Malatesta, wailing that he would now be a thousand times better off if he had never married at all. In the patter duet commencing "Cheti, cheti, immantimenti," the pair settle on a counter-plan—to surprise the couple at their assignation and send away the guilty wife.

Scene 2 takes place in the garden. Outside Ernesto sings his serenade, "Com' è gentil"—one of the most beautiful of tenor arias. The equally entrancing duet "Tornami a dir che m'ami"—(Tell me again you love me") follows when Norina admits him. At its conclusion Pasquale and Malatesta appear and, according to plan, Ernesto slips into the house unseen. When Pasquale demands to know who her companion was Norina puts up a fine show of temperament and injured innocence, defying his orders that she must leave his house. Here the able Doctor Malatesta takes over and manages affairs so beautifully that in no time everyone is happy again—the Don to be rid of Norina who plagued him so, and Ernesto to receive his uncle's ready consent to his union with the same lady and a very handsome annual allowance from his uncle thrown in.

So the story ends very happily in the quartet introduced by the master-brain, Doctor Malatesta, with the words, "Bravo, bravo, Don Pasquale!"



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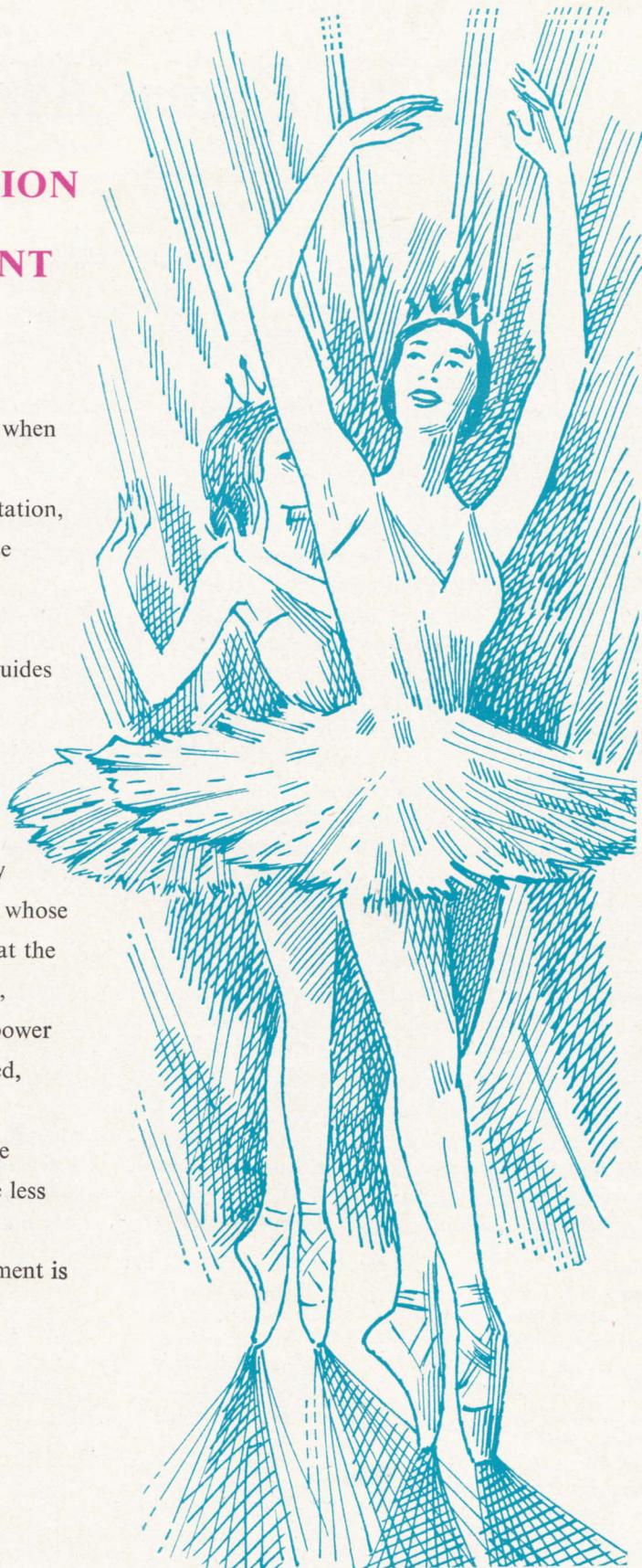
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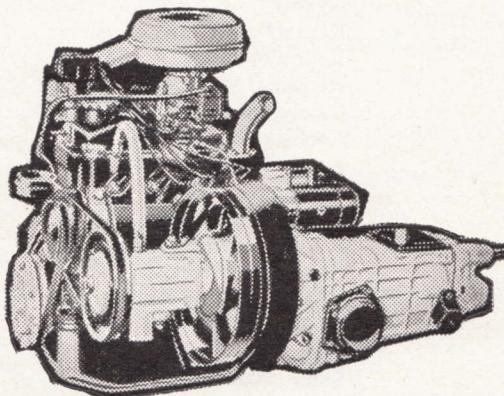
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